How to Read the Prophets

Part I.

Pre-Exilian Minor Prophets

(with Joel)

Bughanan Blake B.D.

Central BAPTIST
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HOW TO READ THE PROPHETS

BEING THE PROPHECIES
ARRANGED CHRONOLOGICALLY IN THEIR
HISTORICAL SETTING
WITH EXPLANATIONS, MAPS, AND GLOSSARY

(*IN FIVE PARTS*)

BY THE

REV. BUCHANAN BLAKE, B.D.

PART I.

THE PRE-EXILIAN MINOR PROPHETS
(WITH JOEL).

SECOND EDITION

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS.

It has often been found difficult to profit fully from the reading of the prophecies of the Old Testament. But this is especially true of the smaller prophecies. Their arrangement is so manifestly out of all historical connection with the circumstances, in which their authors lived, and the period in which they delivered their messages. Hence any light that their historical surroundings could throw upon the exact meaning of their references is entirely wanting. To make these prophecies intelligible therefore to the plainest reader, it is necessary that a chronological arrangement of the prophetic books should be adopted. Alongside of the several prophecies should be placed those portions of the Old Testament historical books, which deal with the same period. The aim of this work is consequently in this direction, even to bring within the reach of the many, a clear and succinct presentation of these prophets in their historical environment.

This book is not designed for scholars, but mainly for popular use, and as an aid in the devotional reading of the Scriptures. The former have, lying to their own hand, the necessary apparatus for such an arrangement and understanding of the prophets as is to be desired. Nor does this work profess to contain anything of an original character. It is simply an attempt so to place the Old Testament writings, that they may speak for themselves. There are in the Christian Church competent scholars, who have laid us under deepest obligation. By their original researches into the monuments, inscriptions, and languages of olden days, they have brought much and varied

information to bear upon our Bible. Certain results have been, therefore, more or less, agreed upon. These should be gathered together, and placed before the ordinary reader in a plain, simple, and untechnical manner. It is no help to them to set forth all the authorities for the general views adopted, or to give a list of the various scholars who have so largely, and over a long course of years advanced the land-marks of knowledge. The writer would simply claim to have used for the benefit of himself and others the materials lying to his own hand.

In such a popular manual the critical accuracy of translation, such as is to be found in a work designed for scholars, should not be expected; while the fulness of reference necessary to explain all the conclusions adopted would be here wholly out of place. The detailed verse by verse criticism again, given in a Commentary, is not to be looked for. The aim in view is to give a broad, general idea of results. More difficult references are dealt with in a glossary, while the readers have before them, first of all, a consecutive arrangement of the Text, with appropriate paragraph headings, and then a brief representation of the prophet's message and surroundings, giving a clear outline of his work for his own day.

So to place the text, in such close association with his own time, that the prophet may speak for himself,—this is our aim. To free the writings from all accidental circumstances of arrangement, or unhistorical interpretation; to let them shine in their own light,—towards this we labour. Much error has arisen from a new historical context being sought for the prophets. There has often been a failure to do justice to what was the primary application of the prophet's words; another meaning with a future fulfilment has been too largely insisted on. Most certainly the earlier prophecies must be read in the light of the later, and fuller revelation, if we would do justice to the abiding and essential principles of the Divine Economy. Only thus can these be separated from the temporary and local forms, in which they at first found expression. At the same

time, the distinct application of the prophet's message must first of all be sought in his own conditions. Every prophet had an announcement to make of the Mind and Will of God to his own generation. How was this message understood when it was first delivered? This question must be answered. If prophecy after prophecy be thus read in its true historical succession, an important step will indeed be taken to understand the development of the doctrines of revelation.

All chapter and verse divisions have been removed. The explanatory headings found in our Bibles, which too often ignore all the primary applications, have also disappeared. The different styles of composition, whether dialogue, or lamentation, or narrative, poetry or prose have been distinguished, where possible. This has led in many cases to divergences from the authorised translation, but only it is hoped in the direction of making the meaning more clear and distinct. The aid of the Revised Version, especially of its marginal readings, as also of the excellent Variorum Bible, has been gratefully used. Rhythm and the necessity of a popular understanding of passages must often determine translations. While some of these may not be in harmony with a literal criticism, they should always agree with the true sense of the original. The various versions preserved for us with their different readings, and the valuable suggestions of competent Hebrew scholars, are extremely helpful to a clearer and simpler reading, where the received Text is obscure or defective.

There are chronological difficulties in Old Testament history which have not yet found a complete solution. Some key is still wanting to explain the system on which the reigns of the Jewish kings were reckoned. The Assyrian Inscriptions have fixed several important and outstanding dates. In the cross references, or synchronisms, dating one king's reign in relation to a contemporary, only a general correspondence is at present possible.

In regard to the existing arrangement of the Minor prophets in our Bible, it has to be remembered that this is very

haphazard, and that another arrangement has been adopted in the LXX. In connection, too, with such books as those of Isaiah and Zechariah, in which prophecies of different authors, having, perhaps, the same name, have been placed together, no critical method was adopted in ancient times. Historical considerations have, therefore, to be fully weighed here. So little is known about the several prophets themselves, that obviously our attention should be mainly directed to the truths they proclaim. They were but the channel, through which divine messages came ; the message is of more importance than the messenger. No foregone conclusion, therefore, as to the authorship of the prophecies, or prejudice in favour of tradition, should prevent us applying the historical test where we can. That this test does not always yield a final result at the present time goes without saying. Hence some conclusions may have to be revised. Here as everywhere caution in judgment is of supreme importance.

Having been encouraged by the reception of his attempt to give a popular representation of the teaching and work of the first Isaiah, the author has been led to proceed on similar lines with the rest of the prophetic books. This accounts for the nature of the grouping in the present series, which when the work is finished may be made more historical. The scheme when completed will cover the prophecies of the Old Testament in five parts, and in the following way :—I. The Pre-Exilian Minor Prophets ; II. Isaiah i.-xxxix. ; III. Jeremiah ; IV. Ezekiel ; V. The Post - Exilian Prophecies, including Isaiah xl.-lxvi.

If these volumes help to a clearer understanding of the prophets and a fuller appreciation of their teaching in the case of others, as the preparation of them has done in his own case, the author will be richly rewarded.

Explanatory note.—The names of persons and places printed in black type are dealt with in the Glossary at the end, in the order in which they occur in the text.

DIVISION I.

THE TEXT OF SCRIPTURE.

CHAPTER I.

Introductory—The Historical Period (800-750 B.C.).

The Reign of Jeroboam II.

In the fifteenth year of **Amaziah**, the son of **Joash**, king of Judah, Jeroboam, the son of **Joash**, king of **Israel**, began to reign in **Samaria**, and reigned forty and one years. But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from all the sins of **Jeroboam**, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He restored the boundary of Israel, from the entering in of **Hamath** unto the Sea of the **Arabah**, according to the Word of God, which He spake by the hand of His servant **Jonah**, the son of Amittai, the prophet, who was of **Gath-Hepher**. For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter, and that for every class of the people; and there was no helper for Israel. And the Lord said that He would not blot out the name of Israel from under heaven: but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, the son of Joash.

(2 Kings xiv. 23-27.)

CHAPTER II.

The Prophecy of Jonah (770 B.C.).

His Commission and Disobedience.

Now the Word of the Lord had come unto Jonah, the son of Amittai, saying—

"Arise, go to **Nineveh**, that great city, and cry against it, for their wickedness is come up before Me."

But Jonah rose, and fled unto **Tarshish** from the presence of the Lord, and went down to **Joppa**. And he found there a ship going to Tarshish, so he paid the fare thereof, and went down into it, to go with them unto Tarshish from the Presence of the Lord. But the Lord sent out a great wind into the sea, and there was a mighty tempest in the sea, so that the ship was like to be broken. Then the mariners were afraid, and cried every man unto his god, and cast forth the wares, that were in the ship, to lighten it of them. But Jonah was gone down into the sides of the ship, and he lay, and was fast asleep. Then the shipmaster came unto him, and said to him, "What meanest thou, O sleeper? Arise, call upon thy God: if so be that God will think upon us, that we perish not."

And they said every one to his fellow, "Come, and let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this calamity has come upon us."

So they cast lots, and the lot fell upon Jonah. Then said they unto him, "Tell us, we pray thee, for whose cause this calamity has come upon us? What is thine occupation? And whence comest thou? What is thy country? And of what people art thou?"

And he said unto them, "I am an Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who hath made the sea, and the dry land."

Then were the men exceedingly afraid, and said unto him;

"Why hast thou done this?" (For the men knew that he had fled from the Presence of the Lord, because he had told them.)

Then said they unto him: "What shall we do unto thee, that the sea may be calm unto us?" For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous.

Then he said unto them: "Take me up, and cast me into the sea; so shall the sea be calm unto you. For I know that for my sake this great tempest is upon you."

Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to bring the ship to land, but they could not, for the sea was more and more tempestuous against them. Wherefore they cried unto the Lord, and said, "We beseech Thee, O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not upon us innocent blood. For Thou, O Lord, hast done as it pleased Thee!"

Jonah's Punishment.

So they took up Jonah, and cast him out into the sea, and the sea ceased from her raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, and made vows. But the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. (Ch. i. 1-17.)

Jonah's Prayer and its Answer.

Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord, his God, out of the fish's belly.

And he said :—
I cried in my affliction unto the Lord ! He answered me !
Out of the midst of the grave I cried ! Thou heard'st my voice !

Thou casted'st me into the deep—the midst of the sea ! Waters were on every side !
All Thy waves, and Thy billows—they went over me !

Then I said : I am cast away from Thy sight !
Yet again will I look to Thy Holy House !
The waters compassed my soul ! The deep was around me !

The seaweed—it was wrapt around my head !
To the foundations of the hills, I sank ! Earth's bars closed upon me—for ever !

But Thou hast saved my life from destruction, O Lord, my God !
When my heart was fainting within me, I remembered the Lord.

Yea, my prayer came up to Thee, even to Thy Holy Temple !
They that regard lying vanities forsake their own good.

As for me—I will sacrifice to Thee with the voice of thankfulness !
I will pay my vows. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord.

Now the Lord had spoken unto the fish, and it had cast forth Jonah upon the dry land. (Ch. ii. 1-10.)

Jonah's second Call and Commission.

Then the Word of the Lord came unto Jonah the second time, saying:

"Arise! Go unto Nineveh, that great city, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee."

So Jonah arose, and went unto Nineveh, according to the Word of the Lord. (Now Nineveh was an exceeding great city, requiring three days to go round it.) And when Jonah had gone a day's journey in the city, he cried, and said: "Only forty days, and Nineveh shall fall!"

(Ch. iii. 1-4.)

The Repentance of Nineveh.

Then the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. The news also reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and laid his royal robes from him, and covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed, and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying:—

The Royal Edict.

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything!
Let them not eat, nor drink water!
And let man and beast be covered with sackcloth:
Let them cry unto God, with earnest voice.
Let them turn every one from his evil way:
Let them turn from the violence that is in their hands.
Who can tell? Whether God turns and hath pity!
Whether He turns from His fierce anger! And we perish not!

The Divine Forgiveness.

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way. And God repented of the calamity, which He had said He would bring upon them. Then He brought it not; but this displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was very angry. (Ch. iii. 5-iv. 1.)

The Prophet's misunderstanding of God's Way.

Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord, and said: "I pray Thee, O Lord! was this not what I said, when I was still in my own country? Therefore I fled before unto Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repentest Thee of the (threatened) calamity. Therefore, now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live."

The Divine Vindication.

Then said the Lord, "Doest thou well to be angry?"

So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow till he might see what would become of the city. Then the Lord God prepared a gourd, and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be a shade over his head, to shelter him in his exposed condition. And Jonah was exceedingly grateful for this gourd. But God prepared a worm when the next morning came, and it smote the gourd that it withered away. It also came to pass, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind. Then the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, and he fainted and wished to die, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

And God said to Jonah;

"Doest thou well to be angry about the gourd?"

Then he said :

" I do well to be angry, even unto death."

Then said the Lord :—

" Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest thou it to grow—which came forth in a night, and perished in a night ! And should I not spare Nineveh that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand persons, that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle ? "

(Ch. iv. 2-11.)

CHAPTER III.

The Prophecy of Amos (780-740 B.C.).

The Prophet's Period.

The words of **Amos**, who belonged to the peasant-proprietors of **Tekoa**, which he saw, concerning Israel in the days of **Uzziah**, king of Judah, and the days of **Jeroboam**, the son of Joash, king of Israel, two years before the **earthquake** (758 B.C.). (Ch. i. 1.)

About the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, began Azariah (*i.e.*, Uzziah), son of Amaziah, to reign. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign, and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. His mother's name was Jecholiah of Jerusalem ; and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done, save that the **High Places** were not removed. The people sacrificed, and burnt incense still on the High Places. And the Lord smote the king, so that he was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a lazar-house. (2 Kings xv. 1-5.)

Part I.

The Prophetic Message. Eight Solemn Warnings.

Now Amos said :—

"The Lord roareth from Sion ! He uttereth His voice from Jerusalem !

The pastures of the shepherds mourn ! The top of **Carmel** withereth !"

1. To Syria.

Thus saith the Lord :

For three wrongs done by **Damascus**, yea for four, I cannot **restore** them !

They have threshed **Gilead**, with threshing instruments of iron !

I have sent a fire against Hazael's House ; it will destroy **Benhadad's** palaces !

I will break the bars of Damascus, and cut off **Bekath-Aven's** king.

And he that wieldeth the sceptre in **Beth-Eden.**

Syria shall go into captivity to **Kir**. Saith the Lord.

2. To the Philistines.

Thus saith the Lord :

For three wrongs done by **Gaza**, yea for four, I cannot restore them !

They have taken captives, during peace, to hand them over to Edom !

I have sent a fire against the walls of Gaza ! It will destroy her palaces !

I will cut off Ashdod's king, and him that ruleth in Ashkelon !

I will turn My hand against Ekron ! The remnant of the Philistines are no more ! Saith the Lord.

3. To Tyre.

Thus saith the Lord :

For three wrongs done by Tyre, yea for four, I cannot restore her !

They handed over to Edom captives taken during peace ;

They remembered not the brotherly covenant that had been made.

I have sent a fire against the walls of Tyre ! It will destroy her palaces !

4. To Edom.

Thus saith the Lord :

For three wrongs done by Edom, yea for four, I cannot restore them !

They have hunted their brother with the sword, and without pity ;

Their anger raged continually ! Their wrath was kept up for ever !

I have sent a fire against **Teman** ! It will destroy the palaces of Bozrah !

5. To Ammon.

Thus saith the Lord :

For three wrongs done by Ammon, yea for four, I cannot restore them.

They ripped up the women of Gilead ! To enlarge their own border !

I have sent a fire against the walls of Rabbah ! It will destroy her palaces !

With shouting in the day of battle ! With tempest in the day of storm !

Their king goeth into captivity ; he and his princes together. Saith the Lord.

6. To Moab.

Thus saith the Lord:

For three wrongs done by Moab, yea for four, I cannot restore them!

They have burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime.

I have sent a fire against Moab! It will destroy the palaces of Kerioth!

And Moab shall die with tumult, mid shouts of war, and trumpet blast!

I will cut off the judge from their midst, and slay all the princes with him. Saith the Lord.

7. To Judah.

Thus saith the Lord:

For three wrongs done by Judah, yea for four, I cannot restore them!

They have despised the law of the Lord; they kept not His precepts;

The lies after which their fathers went have deceived them,

I have sent a fire against Judah! It will destroy the palaces of Jerusalem!

8. To Israel.

Thus saith the Lord:

For three wrongs done by Israel, yea for four, I cannot restore them!

They have sold the righteous for silver—the poor for a pair of shoes!

They clutch at the dust of the earth on the head of the poor; they turn aside the way of the meek.

Both son and father go into the same maid, to profane My holy Name.

They lie down on pawned clothes by every altar! They drink the wine,
The proceeds of fines, in the house of their god.
(Ch. i.-ii. 8.)

Part II.

A reminder of God's dealings. Israel's gross ingratitude.

Yet I destroyed the **Amorite** before them! Whose height was like
The height of the cedars! Whose strength was like the oak's!
Yea, I destroyed his fruit from above, and his roots from beneath.
It was I, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt;
Who was guiding you in the wilderness, for forty years, to give you the land of the Amorite;
I it was, who made your sons prophets, your young men **Nazarites**,
Is it not even so, O Children of Israel? Saith the Lord.
Yet ye gave the Nazarites wine! Ye forbade the prophets to prophesy!
Behold! I will press you down, as a cart full of sheaves is pressed down.
Flight shall perish from the swift! The strong shall not find his strength!
Neither shall the mighty man deliver himself.
The archer shall not stand! The swift shall not escape!
Even the horseman shall not escape. In that day
The most courageous shall flee away naked, saith the Lord.
(Ch. ii. 9-16.)

The Prophet's testimony against Israel: its necessity.

Hear the Word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O Children of Israel, against the whole family, which I brought up from the land of Egypt, saying:

You only have I known of all earth's families; therefore I will punish all your sin.

Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Will a lion roar in the forest, when he hath no prey?

Will a young lion cry out of his den, if he have taken nothing?

Can a bird fall in a snare upon the earth, where no gin is?

Shall a snare spring up from the earth, and have caught nothing?

Shall a trumpet be blown in the city, and the people not be afraid?

Shall there be trouble in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?

Surely the Lord God doeth nothing without revealing His secret unto His servants the prophets!

The lion hath roared, who will not fear? The Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophesy?

Publish it in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say: "Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria, and behold what great tumults are in the midst thereof, and what oppressions are in the midst thereof."

Sins specified. The First Sin. Violence.

"For they do not know to do right," saith the Lord, "who store up by violence and robbery in their palaces." Therefore thus saith the Lord: "An adversary shall be, round about thy land; and he shall bring down thy strength from thee, and thy palaces shall be spoiled."

Thus saith the Lord: "As a shepherd rescueth out of the mouth of a lion **two legs**, and a piece of an ear, so shall the Children of Israel be rescued that sit in Samaria on the corner of a couch, and on the silken cushions of Damascus."

"Hear ye, and testify against the House of Jacob," saith the Lord, the God of Hosts. "For, in the day that I shall visit the transgressions of Israel upon him, I will also visit the altars of **Bethel**, and the horns of the altar shall be cut off, and fall to the ground; and I will smite the **winter-house** with the summer house; and the **houses of ivory** shall perish, and the great houses shall have an end," saith the Lord. (Ch. iii. 1-15.)

The Second Sin of Israel. Self-indulgence.

Hear this word, ye **kine of Bashan**, that are in the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their lords, "Bring, and let us drink." "The Lord God hath sworn by His Holiness, that lo! the days shall come upon you that He will drag you away with **hooks**, and your children with small hooks. Then ye shall go out at the openings, every one straight before her, and cast yourselves before **Rimmon**," saith the Lord.

The Third Sin. Impenitence in spite of Warning.

"Ye come to Bethel, and transgress! At **Gilgal** ye are adding to your transgression. Ye bring also your sacrifices every morning, your tithes every three days. And ye offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving with that which is leavened, and ye proclaim and publish your free-will offerings, for this is pleasing to you, O ye Children of Israel," saith the Lord God. (Ch. iv. 1-5.)

A Series of Five Judgments.

1. Famine.

"And I also! I have given you scarcity of food in all your cities, and want of bread in all your districts; yet have ye not returned unto Me," saith the Lord.

2. Want of Rain.

"I have also withholden the rain from you, when there were only three months to the harvest; and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city—one piece of ground was rained upon, and the piece, whereupon it rained not, withered. So two or three towns came to one town to drink water, but they were not satisfied. Yet have ye not returned unto Me," saith the Lord.

3. Blight, &c., among the Fruit of the Land.

"I have smitten you with blasting and mildew. When your gardens, and your vineyards, and your fig-trees, and your olive-trees increased, the palmer-worm devoured them. Yet have ye not returned unto Me," saith the Lord.

4. Plague and Pestilence among Men and Animals.

"I have sent among you the pestilence, as it rages in Egypt. Your young men have I slain with the sword, and I have destroyed your horses, and I have made your camps full of bad smells. Yet have ye not returned unto Me," saith the Lord.

5. Devastation of the Country.

"I have overthrown some of your towns, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a fire-brand plucked out of the burning. Yet have ye not returned unto Me," saith the Lord.

The Divine Conclusion and Revelation.

Therefore this am I doing unto thee, O Israel; yea this am I doing unto thee. Prepare to meet thy God, O Israel, for, lo! it is He that formed the mountains, and created the wind, and declareth unto man what his thought is, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth—even the Lord, the God of Hosts! This is His Name. (Ch. iv. 6-13.)

Part III.

The Prophet's Lamentation over the State of Israel, with Exhortations to Repentance.

Hear ye this word, which I take up against you, even this lamentation, O House of Israel!

The virgin of Israel is fallen! She rises no more!
Forsaken, she lies upon the ground! No one raises her!

For thus saith the Lord: "The town in the House of Israel, that had a thousand shall have only a hundred, and that which had a hundred shall have only ten."

For thus saith the Lord unto the House of Israel:

"Seek ye Me, and ye shall live; but seek not Bethel, nor enter into Gilgal, and pass not to **Beersheba**; for Gilgal shall surely go into captivity, and Bethel shall become Beth-Aven. Seek Jehovah, and ye shall live! Otherwise He will break out like fire in the House of **Joseph**, and devour, and there be none to quench it in Bethel. O, ye who turn justice to wormwood, and cast righteousness down to the ground! Seek Him, who hath made the **Pleiades**, and **Orion**, who turneth the shadow of death into the morning, and maketh the day dark with night! Him who calleth

for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth! It is He that bringeth destruction against the strong,—yea, even destruction against the stronghold. Jehovah is His name." (Ch. v. 1-9.)

The State of Things, and Coming Judgment.

They hate him that rebuketh in the **gate**; and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly. Forasmuch then as you tread upon the poor, and take from him presents of wheat, ye shall not dwell in the houses of hewn stone, which ye have built; ye shall not drink the wine of the pleasant vineyards, which ye have planted. I know your manifold transgressions, and your great sins. By them you afflict the just, take bribes, and publicly deprive the poor of his right. In a time like this, prudent men keep silence—for it is an evil time!

(Ch. v. 10-13.)

An Exhortation to Repentance.

Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live! And so the Lord, the God of Hosts, shall be with you, as ye have professed that He is. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish public justice. It may be, that the Lord, God of Hosts, will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph.

A Divine Visitation.

For thus saith the Lord, the God of Hosts:

"There shall be wailing in all the open spaces, and they shall be crying in all the streets, 'Alas! Alas!' They shall also call upon the farmer to mourn, yea, also, upon the professional mourners to wail. And in all the vineyards there shall be wailing. For I will pass through thee," saith the Lord. (Ch. v. 14-17.)

The Day of the Lord: its true meaning.

Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! What good will it bring to you? The day of the Lord will be to you darkness, and not light! In your case it shall be as if a man fled from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and rested his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him. Shall you not find the day of the Lord darkness, and not light? Even very dark, with no brightness in it at all? (Ch. v. 18-20.)

A False and Insincere Worship Condemned.

I hate, I despise your feasts! I take no delight in your solemn services.

Though you bring Me burnt offerings, and meal offerings—I cannot accept them!

Even the peace-offerings of your fat beasts—I will not look at them!

Take hence the noise of thy songs—I will not hear the melody of thy viols!

Let justice run down as water—let righteousness be a mighty stream.

"Did ye offer unto Me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness during the forty years, O House of Israel? Take up now **Siccuth**, your Moloch, and **Chiun**, your sun-image, which ye have made for yourselves: for I will cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus," saith the Lord. His name is the God of Hosts. (Ch. v. 21-27.)

Condemnation of Israel for luxury and indifference.

Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and to them that are secure in the hill of Samaria, even to the renowned chiefs of the nations, to whom the House of Israel come! Pass ye unto **Calneh**, and see! And from there go ye to

Hamath, the great: then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are you better than these kingdoms? Or is their border greater than your border? Ye are those that put away the day of calamity, and cause the throne of violence to come near! Ye lie upon beds of ivory, and stretch yourselves upon your couches, and eat lambs chosen out of the flock and calves out of the midst of the stall! Ye sing to the music of the viol; ye invent for yourselves instruments of music, like **David's**! Ye drink wine in bowls, and anoint yourselves with the finest ointments! But ye are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph. (Ch. vi. 1-6.)

The Divine Sentence.

Therefore, now shall they be the first that shall go into captivity, and the banquet revelry of the luxurious shall be removed! "The Lord God hath sworn by Himself," saith the Lord, the God of Hosts. "I abhor the excellency of Jacob, and hate his palaces; therefore will I deliver up the city with all that is therein. And it shall come to pass, if there are ten men in one house, that they shall die. And when a man's kinsman, even he that **burneth** his remains, shall take him up, to carry the bones out of the house, and shall say unto him that is in the house, "Is there any one else still with thee?" and he shall say, "No." Then shall he say, "Hold thy peace; for we must not make mention of the name of the Lord here."

For, behold! the Lord issues His command; and He will smite the great house with breaches, and the small house with clefts. (Ch. vi. 7-11.)

The Vanity of Human Resistance.

Shall horses run upon the rock? Will one plough there with oxen?

Ah! ye have turned justice into gall; the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.

Ye rejoice in vanity! Ye say, "Have we not got horns by our own strength?"

The Assyrian Invasion foretold.

But, behold! I will raise up against you a nation, O House of Israel, saith the Lord, the God of Hosts; and they shall afflict you from the entering in of Hamath unto the **Wady** of the Arabah. (Ch. vi. 12-14.)

Part IV.

Three Prophetic Visions.

First Vision: A Locust Plague.

Thus hath the Lord God showed unto me. Behold! He formed locusts in the early springing up of the latter growth; and lo! it was the latter growth after the king's mowings. And it came to pass that when the locusts had made an end of eating the grass of the land, then I said, "O Lord God! Forgive, I beseech Thee! By whom shall Jacob be raised? For he is small." The Lord repented for this. "It shall not be," saith the Lord.

Second Vision: A Devouring Fire.

Thus hath the Lord showed unto me. Behold! the Lord God called to contend by fire. And the fire devoured the great deep, and did eat up the land.

Then said I, "O Lord God! Cease, I beseech Thee! By whom shall Jacob be raised up? For he is small."

The Lord repented for this. "This also shall not be," saith the Lord God.

The Third Vision: A Plumb-Line.

Thus hath the Lord showed unto me. Behold! the Lord stood upon a wall made to a plumb-line, with the plumb-line in His hand. And the Lord said unto me, "Amos, what seest thou?"

And I said, "A plumb-line."

Then said the Lord: "Behold! I will set a plumb-line in the midst of My people Israel. I will not pass by them again any more. For the high places of Isaac shall be made desolate, and the holy places of Israel shall be laid waste. Yea, I will rise against the house of Jeroboam with the sword. (Ch. vii. 1-9.)

An Interdict on the Prophet's Mission to Israel.

Then Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, sent to Jeroboam, the king of Israel, saying: "Amos hath conspired against thee, in the midst of the House of Israel! The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos saith, "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, and Israel shall surely be led away captive out of their own land!"

Amaziah also said unto Amos: "O thou seer! Flee thee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread, and prophesy there, but prophesy not again any more at Bethel; for it is the king's sanctuary, and it is the king's house."

The Prophet's Reply.

Then answered Amos, and said to Amaziah: "I was not a **prophet**, neither was I the son of a prophet: but I was a peasant-proprietor, and in charge of sycamore fruit. And the Lord took me as I watched the flock, and the Lord said unto me, 'Go, prophesy unto My people Israel.' Now, therefore, hear thou the Word of the Lord. Thou sayest, 'Prophesy not against Israel, and utter not thy word against

the House of Isaac.' Therefore thus saith the Lord 'Thy wife shall be a harlot in the city, and thy sons and thy daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy country shall be divided by line; and thou shalt die in a **polluted** land. Israel shall assuredly go forth into captivity out of his own land." (Ch. vii. 10-17.)

Part V.

Two Further Visions and the Prophet's Last Words.

1. The Basket of Summer Fruit.

Thus hath the Lord showed unto me. And, behold! a basket of summer fruit. And He said, "Amos, what seest thou?"

And I said: "A basket of summer fruit."

Then said the Lord unto me:

"The end is come upon My people Israel! I will pass by them no more.

Howlings shall be the Temple songs in that day, saith the Lord.

Many dead bodies shall there be; in every place they shall cast them out in silence." (Ch. viii. 1-3.)

An Earnest Exhortation.

Hear this, O ye that clutch at the needy, even to make the poor of the land to cease! Ye that say, "When will the new moon be gone that we may sell corn? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat?" Ye that make the measure small, and the weight great, and that falsify the balances in deceit; "that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes, and sell the refuse of the wheat."

The Lord hath sworn by the Excellency of Jacob: "Surely I will never forget any of their works." Shall not the land tremble for this? And every one mourn that dwelleth therein? Yea, it shall all rise up as the Nile, and it shall be troubled and sink again as the Nile of Egypt.

"And it shall come to pass in that day," saith the Lord God, "that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the light of day; and I will turn your feasts into mourning, and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all your loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as a day of mourning for an only son, and the end thereof as a day of bitterness."

"Behold the days come," saith the Lord God, "that I will send a famine upon the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the Words of the Lord: and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the north even to the east they shall run to and fro, to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it. In that day shall fair virgins and young men faint for thirst. They that swear by the **Sin of Samaria**, and say, 'As thy God, O Dan, liveth!' and, 'As the Way of Beersheba liveth!' even they shall fall and never rise up again." (Ch. viii. 4-14.)

The Last Prophetic Vision: A Shattered Temple.

I saw the Lord standing beside the altar, and He said:

"Smite the capitals that the thresholds may shake, and break all their heads in pieces; and I will slay the remnant with the sword."

Not one of them shall flee away; not one of them shall escape.

Padan Aram
(Mesopotamia)
Cyprus
Syrian
Desert
DOMINIONS OF
DAVID AND SOLOMON
English Miles
0 20 40 60 80 100
Longitude East of Greenwich
John Bartholomew & Co. Edin.

Though they dig into the Underworld, thence shall My hand bring them;
Though they climb up to Heaven, thence will I bring them down;
Though they hide on Carmel's top, thence will I, after search, take them out;
Though they be hid from My sight, in the bottom of the sea,
Thence will I command the sea-serpent, and it shall bite them.
Yea, though they go into captivity before their foes, there will I command the sword to slay them.
I will set Mine eyes upon them for evil, and not for good.
The Lord, God of Hosts, toucheth the land, and it melts.
All that dwell in the land shall mourn.
It shall rise up like the Nile; like the Nile it shall sink again.
He buildeth His stories in the heaven; He foundeth His vault on the earth.
He calleth for the waters of the sea! He poureth them out
Upon the surface of the earth! The Lord is His Name.
(Ch. ix. 1-6.)

An Appeal to Israel.

Ye are not as the Children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O Children of Israel, are ye? saith the Lord. Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt? And the Philistines from **Caphtor**, and the Syrians from **Kir?** Behold! The eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom, and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth; but I will not utterly destroy the House of Jacob, saith the Lord. For

lo ! I will command, and I will sift the House of Israel among all nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve, yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth. All the sinners of My people, who say, "The evil shall not overtake or come upon us," shall die by the sword. (Ch. ix. 7-10.)

A Brighter Day foretold : The Revival of David's House.

In that day will I raise up the House of David that is now fallen, and build up the breaches thereof ; and I will raise up its ruins, and I will build it as in the former days.* That so it may possess the remnant of **Edom**, and of all the nations which were called by My Name, saith the Lord, that doeth this. Behold ! the days come, saith the Lord, that the ploughman shall overtake the reaper, and the treader of grapes him that soweth seed ; and the mountains shall drop sweet wine, and all the hills shall melt. Then I will bring again the captivity of My people Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them ; they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof ; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. Yea, I will plant them upon their own land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of the land, which I have given them, saith the Lord.

CHAPTER IV.

Israel's Last Kings (760-722 B.C.).

The Troublous End of the House of Jehu in Jezreel.

Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam, and all that he did, and his might—how he warred, and how he recovered Damascus and Hamath (which had belonged to Judah) for

* See the Map of David's Kingdom.

Israel, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? And Jeroboam slept with his fathers, even with the kings of Israel, and **Zechariah** his son reigned in his stead. (2 Kings xiv. 28, 29.)

A Time of Anarchy (758 B.C.).

In the thirty and eighth year of Azariah (*i.e.*, Uzziah), king of Judah, did Zechariah, the son of Jeroboam, reign over Israel in **Samaria** for six months. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his fathers had done. He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. Then **Shallum**, the son of Jabesh, conspired against him, and smote him at **Ibleam**, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Zechariah, behold! they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. This was the Word of the Lord, which He spake unto Jehu, saying: "Thy sons shall sit on the throne of Israel, unto the **fourth** generation." And so it came to pass.

A New Dynasty. A Time of Revolution. Interregnum and Confusion (758-752 B.C.).

Shallum, the son of Jabesh, began to reign in the nine and thirtieth year of Uzziah, king of Judah; and he reigned a full month in Samaria. For **Menahem**, the son of Gadi, went up from **Tirzah**, and came to Samaria, and smote Shallum, the son of Jabesh, in Samaria, and slew him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Shallum, and the conspiracy, which he made, behold! they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. Then Menahem smote **Tiphsah**, and all that were therein, and the boundaries thereof from Tirzah, because they opened not their gates to him; all the women therein that were with child, he ripped up.

In this nine and thirtieth year of Azariah (*i.e.*, Uzziah), king of Judah, began Menahem, the son of Gadi, to reign over Israel. He reigned ten years in Samaria; and he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. **Pul**, the king of Assyria, came against the land, and Menahem gave Pul a thousand talents of silver, that his help might be with him, to confirm the kingdom in his person. And Menahem exacted the money of Israel, even of all the mighty men of wealth, of each man fifty shekels of silver, to give to the king of Assyria. So the king of Assyria returned, and stayed not there in the land. And the rest of the acts of Menahem, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? And Menahem slept with his fathers, and Pekahiah reigned in his stead.

About the fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah, Pekahiah, the son of Menahem, began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and reigned two years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord. He departed not from the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. Then Pekah, the son of Remaliah, a captain of his, conspired against him, and smote him in Samaria, in the palace of the king's house, with Argob, and Arieh, and with him fifty men of the Gileadites: and he killed him, and reigned in his stead. And the rest of the acts of Pekahiah, and all that he did, behold they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel.

(2 Kings xv. 8-26.)

The Reign of Pekah (746-728 B.C.).

In the two and fiftieth year of Azariah, king of Judah,

Pekah, the son of Remaliah, began to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned twenty years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord: he departed not from the sins of Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. In the days of Pekah, king of Israel, came **Tiglath-Pileser**, king of Assyria, and took Ijon, and Abel-beth-Maachah, and Janoah, and Kedesh, and Hazor, and Gilead (736 B.C.), and Galilee, all the land of Naphtali, and carried them captive to Assyria. And **Hoshea**, the son of Elah, made a conspiracy against Pekah, the son of Remaliah, and smote him, and slew him, and reigned in his stead, about the thirtieth year of Jotham the son of Uzziah. And the rest of the acts of Pekah, and all that he did, behold, they are written in the book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. (2 Kings xv. 27-31.)

The Reign of Hoshea, the last King of Israel (728-722 B.C.).

About the twelfth year of Ahaz, king of Judah, began Hoshea, the son of Elah, to reign over Israel in Samaria, and he reigned nine years. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, but not as the kings of Israel that were before him. Against him came up **Shalmaneser**, king of Assyria: and Hoshea became his vassal, and paid him tribute. But the king of Assyria found conspiracy on the part of Hoshea: for he had sent ambassadors to **So**, king of Egypt, and brought no tribute to the king of Assyria, as he had done every year. Therefore, the king of Assyria shut him up, and bound him in prison. Then the king of Assyria came up throughout the whole land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it for three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea, the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah, and by

Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. For so it was that the Children of Israel had sinned against the Lord, their God, who had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the power of the Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Israel's great Apostasy, and its Consequences.

They had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the nations, whom the Lord had cast out from before the Children of Israel, and of the kings of Israel, which they had made. And the Children of Israel unfaithfully did those things that were not right, against the Lord, their God, and they built them High Places in all their cities, from the tower of the watchmen to the fortified city: and they set up for themselves pillars, and Asherim on every high hill, and under every green tree. And there they burnt incense in all the High Places, as did the nations whom the Lord carried away before them. Yea, they wrought wicked things to provoke the Lord to anger. For they served idols: whereof the Lord had said unto them: "Ye shall not do this thing." Yet the Lord had testified against Israel, and against Judah by all the prophets, and by all the seers, saying: "Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep My commandments, and My statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by My servants, the prophets." Notwithstanding, they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the Lord their God; and they rejected His statutes, and His covenant, that He made with their fathers, and His testimonies, with which He testified unto them, and they followed a vain worship, and went after the nations that were round about them, whom the Lord had commanded them

not to follow. Yea, they left all the commandments of the Lord, their God, and made for themselves molten images, even two calves, and made an **Asherah**, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served Baal. And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire, and used divination, and enchantments, and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. Therefore, the Lord was very angry with Israel, and removed them out of His sight. There was none left, but the tribe of Judah only. (Judah also did not keep the commandments of the Lord, their God, but walked in the statutes of Israel, which they made.) Thus the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight. For He rent Israel from the House of David, and they made Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, king. And Jeroboam drave Israel from following the Lord, and made them sin a great sin. For the Children of Israel walked in all the sins which Jeroboam did; they departed not from them until the Lord removed Israel out of His sight, as He had said He would by all His servants, the prophets.

So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day. And the king of Assyria brought people from Babylon, and from **Cuthah**, and from **Ava**, and from Hamath, and from Sepharvaim, and placed them in the cities of Samaria, instead of the Children of Israel.

The Mixed Worship of these Colonists.

And these nations feared the Lord, and served their graven images, both their children, and their children's children. As did their fathers, so do they unto this day.

(2 Kings xvii. 1-24, 41.)

CHAPTER V.

The Prophet Hosea (770-725 B.C.).

JEHOVAH'S LAST MESSAGE TO THE TEN TRIBES.

The Prophet's Period.

The Word of the Lord that came unto Hosea, the son of Beeri, (in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, **Hezekiah**, kings of Judah, and) in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel.

Part I. (about 770 B.C.).

Chapters i-iii.

The beginning of the Word of the Lord by Hosea. Hosea's Married Life made Typical. First Prophetic Message.

Now the Lord said unto Hosea :—"Go, take unto thee as wife a woman who has been a harlot, and have children by her, for the land hath committed great whoredom in departing from the Lord."

So he went, and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim ; and she conceived, and bare him a son.

Then the Lord said unto him : "Call his name **Jezreel**, for yet a little while, and I will avenge the blood of Jezreel upon the **House of Jehu**, and will cause the kingdom of the House of Israel to cease. Then it shall come to pass in that day that I will break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."

Second Prophetic Message and Sign.

And she conceived again, and bare a daughter.

And God said unto him: "Call her name **Lo-ruhamah**, for I will no more have mercy upon the House of Israel, that I should in any measure pardon them. But I will have mercy upon the House of Judah, and will save them by the Lord their God, for I will not save them by bow, nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by horsemen.

The Third Prophetic Sign.

Now, when she had weaned Lo-ruhamah, she conceived and bare a son: then said God: "Call his name **Lo-ammi**: for ye are not my people, and I am not your God."

(Ch. i. 1-9.)

A Promise of Reunion and Reconciliation.

"Yet the number of the Children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured, nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that instead of its being said, 'Ye are not My people,' it shall be said, 'Ye are the sons of the living God.' Then shall the Children of Judah, and the Children of Israel be gathered together, and appoint themselves one head, and shall go up from the land (to Jerusalem). For great shall be the day of Jezreel: therefore ye shall call your brethren, **Ammi**, and your sisters, **Ruhamah.** (Ch. i. 10; ii. 1.)

The Divine Treatment of Israel under type of a Faithless Wife.

Plead with your mother, plead: (for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband). Let her abandon her whoredoms, and forsake her adulterous ways, lest I leave her unprotected, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her a desolation, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst; and not have mercy upon her children, for they are the children of whoredoms. For their mother hath played the

harlot; she, that conceived them, hath done shamefully; for she hath said, "I will go after my lovers, that gave me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drinks." Therefore, behold! I will hedge up her way with thorns, and make a wall, that she shall not find her paths; and she shall follow after her lovers, but shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them. Then she shall say, "I will go and return to my first husband; for then was it better with me than now." But she doth not know that I gave her corn and wine, and multiplied her silver and gold, with which they have served Baal. Therefore will I return and take away My corn in the season thereof, and will take back My wool, and My flax, which I gave for her garments. Yea, now, will I make known her infidelity to her lovers, and none shall deliver her out of Mine hand. I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her Sabbaths, and all her festivals; and I will destroy her vines, and her fig trees, whereof she hath said—"These are the rewards, that my lovers have given me:" and I will make them a forest, and the beasts of the field shall eat them; and I will visit upon her the days she hath worshipped the Baals, in which she has burned incense to them, and decked herself with her **nose-ring,** and her necklace, and gone after her lovers, and forgotten Me, saith the Lord. (Ch. ii. 2-13.)

The Method of Restoration.

Then, behold! I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak in comforting words to her. And thence will I give her her vineyards, and the Valley of **Achor** shall be a door of hope, and she shall be responsive there as in the days of her youth, and as in the days when

she came up out of the land of Egypt. Then it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call Me, "My Husband," and shalt no more call me "**My Baal.**" For I will take away the names of Baalim out of her mouth, and their name shall no more be mentioned. And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field, and with the birds of the air, and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land, and will make them to lie down in safety. Then I will betroth thee unto Me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness, and in justice, and in loving-kindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness; and thou shalt know the Lord. And it shall come to pass in that day I will give answer, saith the Lord. I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth; and the earth shall answer the corn, and the wine, and the oil; and they shall answer Jezreel (*i.e.*, to God's sowing). Yea, I will sow her unto Myself in the land; and I will have pity upon her that was unpitied, and I will call him that was not My people, "My people," and he shall say, "Thou art a God for me." (Ch. ii. 14-23.)

The Divine Attitude Typically Represented.

Then said the Lord to me, "Go once more and love this woman that loveth another—she, who is an adulteress, even as the Lord loves the Children of Israel, who look to other gods, and love cakes of grapes." So I bought her for myself for fifteen pieces of silver, and for a measure of barley, and a half measure of barley; and I said to her, "Thou shalt stay for me for many days; thou shalt not play the harlot; thou shalt not be another's; so will I also be thine."

For the Children of Israel shall remain many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without a **pillar**, and without an ephod, and without **teraphim**; after this shall the Children of Israel return to Me, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; yea, they shall worship the Lord, and His goodness in the coming days. (Ch. iii. 1-5.)

Part II. Chapters iv.-xiv.

Division I. (about 750 B.C.).

The Prophetic Denunciation of Israel's Sin.

Hear the Word of the Lord, ye Children of Israel!
The Lord hath a case against the people of the land;
For there is no truth, nor goodness, nor knowledge of God in it.
There is only swearing and lying; murder and theft; adultery, housebreaking and bloodshed!
Therefore the land mourneth! All its inhabitants languish!
The beasts of the field, the birds of the air, and the fish of the sea shall be taken away! (Ch. iv. 1-3.)

A Lamentation over the Failure of the Priesthood.

Ah! let no one excuse himself, nor reprove another;
For thy people have rebelled against Me, O Priesthood!
And thou hast stumbled by day! The prophet also has stumbled with
Thee by night! Therefore I will destroy thy **stock**!
My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge! Thou hast despised knowledge!
I will cast thee out from being a priest unto Me!
Thou hast forgotten the teaching of thy God! I, even I, will forget thy sons!

As they prospered, they sinned against Me! Their **Glory** for Shame they have exchanged!
They eat the sin offering of My people, and on the guilt offerings set their hearts!
And it is, "Like people, like priest."
Therefore I will bring their ways upon them, and their doings upon them,
They shall eat, and not be satisfied; commit whoredom, and not increase!
For they have ceased to hearken unto the Lord;
Whoredom, and strong drink, and new wine take away their sense. (Ch. iv. 4-11.)

The Idolatry of the Ten Tribes: dangerous to Judah.

The people ask counsel at their stick, and their staff declareth unto them! For the spirit of infidelity hath caused them to err, and they have forsaken their God. They sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and burn incense upon the hills, under oaks, and poplars, and terebinths, because the shade thereof is good. Your daughters are unfaithful, and your daughters-in-law commit adultery. I will not punish your daughters for their infidelity, nor your daughters-in-law for their adultery; for the people themselves are separated with whores, and sacrifice with the temple-harlots. Therefore, the people that have no understanding shall be destroyed. Though thou, O Israel, play the harlot, O may not Judah sin! Come not ye into Gilgal, neither go ye up to **Beth-Aven**, nor swear "As the Lord liveth!" For Israel is wayward as a wayward heifer! Now the Lord had willed even to feed them as a lamb in a large pasture. Ephraim is joined to his idols! Let him alone. Their carouse is over! They have continually committed whore-

dom! Their rulers dearly love the Shame! The wind shall wrap them up in her wings; and they shall be ashamed because of their sacrifices. (Ch. iv. 12-19.)

A Faithful Word to Priest and People.

Hear ye this, O priests! And hearken, ye House of Israel! Yea, give ye ear, O House of the King! For the judgment is against you, because ye have been a snare on **Mizpah**, and a net spread on **Tabor**. Yea, the people who revolt from Me are full of corruption, but I shall chastise them all. I know Ephraim, and Israel is not hid from Me! For now, O Ephraim, thou hast committed whoredom; Israel is defiled. Their doings will not allow them to return unto their God; for a spirit of whoredom is in the midst of them, and they do not know the Lord. And the Glory of Israel doth testify against them; therefore shall Israel and Ephraim stumble in their iniquity. Judah also shall stumble with them. They shall go with their flocks and their herds to seek the Lord, but they shall not find Him. He hath withdrawn Himself from them! They have dealt treacherously with the Lord; for they have borne strange children. Now shall the new moon devour them with their allotments. (Ch. v. 1-7.)

A warning Note.

Blow ye the cornet in **Gibeah!** The trumpet in **Ramah!** Cry aloud at **Bethaven!** The foe is upon thee, O **Benjamin!**

Ephraim shall be a desolation in the day of chastisement! Among the Tribes of Israel have I made known that which shall certainly take place.

The State of Things.

The princes of Judah are like those that remove the

landmarks. I will pour out My wrath upon them like water. Ephraim is oppressed: he is deprived of his right, because he has willingly gone after vanity. Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the House of Judah as rottenness. When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to a king that would **contend** for them, though he could not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. For I am unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the House of Judah. I, even I, will tear them, and go away! I will carry them away, and none shall rescue them! I will go away to My place till they have suffered their chastisement and seek My face. In their time of affliction they will earnestly seek Me. Let them say, "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for He hath torn, and He will heal us! He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days will He revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live before Him. Yea, let us know, even be eager to know the Lord. His going forth is fixed as the morning! Yea, He shall come unto us as the **rain**, as the latter rain that watereth the earth."

(Ch. v. 8—vi. 1-3.)

Part II. Division II. (B.C. 744).

The Divine Unwillingness to give up Ephraim.

O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee?

Your goodness is as a morning cloud—as the dew, it early goeth away!

The State of the Case.

Therefore have I hewed them by the prophets. I have slain them by the words of My mouth. And My judgments have been as the light that goeth forth. For I desired **goodness**, and not sacrifice; and the knowing of God more than burnt offerings! But they have transgressed the covenant like Adam. **There*** in Israel have they dealt treacherously with Me! **Gilead** is a city of those that work iniquity: it is full of the footprints of blood! And as bands of robbers lie in wait for a man, so the companies of priests murder in the way towards **Shechem**; yea, they behave abominably! I have seen a horrible thing in the House of Israel! There*—the whoredom of Ephraim! Israel is defiled! Also for thee, O Judah, there is a harvest prepared! (Ch. vi. 4-11.)

The Sad Condition of King and People.

When I would bring again the captivity of My people—when I would heal Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim and the wickedness of Samaria is discovered. For they commit falsehood; within comes the thief, without the band of robbers spoileth! And they consider not in their hearts. I remember all their wickedness. Now their own doings have beset them round about. They are before My face! They make their king glad with their wickedness, and their princes with their lies; they are all adulterers. As the fire of an oven heated by the baker, which is not stirred while the bread is being prepared; even so in the festival of their king, the princes have made themselves fevered with the heat of wine. He has joined hands with the scornful. For their heart is like an oven, their heart burneth within

* With a significant gesture.

them; their anger sleepeth all the night; in the morning it burneth as a flaming fire. They are all hot as an oven; and they are devouring their judges; all **their kings** are fallen. Not one among them calleth upon Me! As for Ephraim—he hath mixed himself among the peoples: Ephraim is a cake not turned! Strangers have devoured his strength, and he does not know it: yea, gray hairs are here and there upon him, yet he knoweth it not. And the Glory of Israel testifieth against him; but they do not return to the Lord their God, nor for all this do they seek Him.

Ephraim is also like a silly dove without understanding! They call to **Egypt** for help—they go to Assyria. When they shall go there, I will spread My net upon them. I will bring them down, as the birds of the air. I will chastise them, as it has been announced to their people.

(Ch. vii. 1-12.)

A Lamentation.

Woe unto them! For they have fled from Me!
Destruction is upon them! For they have transgressed against Me!
Though I would have redeemed them, yet they have lied against Me!
They have not cried unto Me with their heart, but have howled on their beds.
They cut themselves for corn and wine. They rebel against Me!
I have trained and strengthened their arms, yet they think evil against Me!
They return—not to the Most High*; they are like a deceitful bow.

* Or, They have returned to evil.

Their princes fall by the sword—for the rage of their tongue;
This shall be their derision—in Egypt's land!

(Ch. vii. 13-16.)

Part II. Division III. (738 B.C.).

Israel in Vassalage to Assyria.

The trumpet to thy mouth!
As **an eagle** they come against the House of the Lord!
For they have transgressed My covenant, and trespassed against My law.
Israel shall cry unto Me—"My God! We know Thee!"
Israel hath cast off the good! The enemy pursues him!
They have set up kings, but not by My consent.
They have made princes, but I knew it not.
Of their silver and gold have they made them idols—only to be cut off!
Thy **calf**, O Samaria, is cast off! Mine anger burns against it.
How long will it be ere they recover their innocency?
For it was made in Israel—the workman made it!
It is not God—the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces!
For they have sown the wind, they shall reap the whirlwind.
There's no stalk! The blade yields no meal!
If so be it yields any, strangers swallow it up!
Israel is devoured! They are now among the nations as an empty vessel.
To Assyria they're gone up—a wild ass alone! Ephraim hath hired lovers.
Yea, though they have hired among the nations, now I'll gather them!

Soon will they sorrow for the **tribute** of the **King of Kings!**

Since Ephraim hath made many altars to sin, altars shall be unto him to sin.

For him I am writing My law at length—he counteth it a strange thing!

The sacrifices of Mine offerings they sacrifice, and eat flesh!

The Lord accepteth them not! Now He remembers their guilt!

And He shall visit their sins—to Egypt shall they go!

Yea, Israel forgetteth his Maker, and buildeth palaces.

And Judah—he buildeth many fenced cities!

But I will send a fire upon his cities, and it shall devour his palaces.

Rejoice not, O Israel, unto exulting, like the peoples.

Thou hast gone a whoring, from thy God!

Thou hast loved hire upon every threshing-floor!

The threshing and the wine-press shall not feed them—the new wine shall fail her.

They shall not dwell in the land of the Lord!

Ephraim shall go back to Egypt; and in Assyria eat the unclean!

They shall not pour out wine to the Lord; their sacrifices shall not be pleasing unto Him,

Their bread shall be as the bread of mourners—all that eat thereof shall be polluted,

For their bread shall be for themselves—it shall not come into the House of the Lord.

What will ye do in the day of solemnity—in the day of the feast of the Lord?

For lo! they go from destruction—Egypt gathers them, **Noph** buries them!

Their silver stores—nettles cover them: in their tents—there are thorns.

Come are the days of visitation! come are the days of recompence!

Israel knoweth it!

"A fool is the prophet! A madman, he who hath a spirit!"

For great is thine iniquity—great is thine enmity!

Ephraim is watching against my God! As for the prophet—

A fowler's snare is in all his ways—there's enmity in the House of his God.

They have deeply corrupted themselves, as in the days of **Gibeah**.

He will remember their iniquity—He will visit their sins.

(Ch. viii.-ix. 1-9.)

A Retrospect, with Sad Thoughts.

I found Israel, as one findeth grapes in the wilderness; I saw your fathers, as the first ripe fig at her first season.

They came to **Baal-Peor**, and gave themselves up to that Shame.

They became an abomination to Me, even like the thing they loved!

O Ephraim! Their glory has flown, as a bird!

So that there is no birth, no womb, no conception!

Yea, though they bring up children, yet will I bereave them entirely!

Oh! there will be woe unto them, when I depart from them!

Ephraim, as I look at him, sets his children for the spoiler.

Ephraim brings forth his children for the murderer!

Give them, O Lord, what Thou hast given them,

Even a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts!
All their wickedness is in Gilgal—there I hated them!
For their wicked doings, I will drive them from My House.
No more will I love them! All their princes have rebelled against Me!
Ephraim is smitten! Their root is dried up! They bear no fruit!
Yea, though they bring forth, I will slay their beloved children!
My God hath cast them off, for they hearkened not to Him!
Ah! they shall be wanderers among the nations!

(Ch. ix. 10-17.)

Part II. Division IV.

The Misused Privileges of Israel—the Doom.

Israel was a luxuriant vine! He brought forth fruit abundantly!
As his fruit increased, so have his altars increased:
As his land became productive, he produced images.
Deceitful is their heart! Now are they as guilty ones!
They will break down their altars—their images they shall spoil!
For then shall they say—"We have no king.
We have not feared the Lord—what use is a king to us?"
They swear falsely: they make covenants!
As hemlock groweth up in the furrows of the field, so is justice.
As for the Calf of Bethaven—those who dwell in Samaria tremble for it.
Their people mourn over it—their priests shall be in terror.
Because its glory—it has gone away from it!

It shall be carried into Assyria—a present for their defender!
Ephraim shall be put to shame! Ashamed shall Israel be of his own counsel.
Cut off is Samaria! **Her king**—as a chip upon the water!
Destroyed, the high places of **Aven**—the sin of Israel!
Thorns and thistles come up upon their altars.
And they say to the hills—"Cover us!" To the heights—"Fall on us!"
Since the days of Gibeah—thou hast sinned, O Israel.
There they stood! That it might not overtake them, in Gibeah—
The war against the children of iniquity!
When I desire, I shall punish them,
And peoples shall be gathered against them—in their yoke to **two sins**.
Yea, Ephraim is a trained heifer, that loveth to tread the corn!
I have passed over upon her fair neck—I have made Ephraim to work.
Judah shall plough—Jacob shall break up the clods!
Sow to yourselves in righteousness—reap according to goodness.
Break up your fallow ground! Now is the time to seek the Lord,
That He may come, and teach you righteousness!
Ye have ploughed wickedness—ye have reaped oppression—
Ye have eaten the fruit of lies.
For thou hast trusted in thy chariots—in the number of thy mighty men.
Therefore, a tumult shall be against thy peoples—all thy fortresses shall be spoiled.

As **Shalman** spoiled **Beth-arbel** in the day of battle—the mother with her children dashed in pieces!
So at Bethel shall it be done unto you—for your great wickedness!
With the dawn shall the king of Israel be utterly cut off!
(Ch. x. 1-15.)

Israel's Marked Ingratitude to God.

When Israel was a child, I loved him, and called My **son** out of Egypt.
The more **they** called them, the further they went from them.
They sacrificed unto Baalim—they burned incense to graven images.
Yet I, even I, taught Ephraim to walk, taking him by his arms;
But they knew not that it was I who healed them!
I drew them with the cords of a man—the bands of love!
It was I who took the yoke off them—I who provided meat for them:
To Egypt shall he return! The Assyrian shall be his king!
For they have refused to return unto Me.
The sword shall rage against his cities, and consume his bars;
It shall devour them, because of their own counsels.
And My people—they are bent on backsliding from Me!
Though they were called up to God—not one would raise himself!

The Divine Compassion.

How can I give thee up, O Ephraim? How can I deliver thee up, O Israel?

How can I make thee as **Admah**? How can I treat thee as **Zeboim**?
My heart is turned within me! My compassions are roused within Me!

I'll not execute the fierceness of Mine anger! I'll not again destroy Ephraim!
For I am God, not man! The Holy One is in thy midst! I will not enter the city in fury!

They shall walk after the Lord. He shall roar like a lion!
When He roars, the Children shall come trembling from the **West.**
They shall come quickly, as a bird, out of Egypt,
As a dove, out of Assyria. And I will place them in their own houses.
Thus saith the Lord. (Ch. xi. 1-11.)

Part II. Division V. (725 B.C.).

ON THE EVE OF SAMARIA'S FALL.

A Complaint and a Reminder.

Ephraim compasseth Me with lies! The House of Israel—with deceit!
Judah is still unsteadfast with God,—the faithful Holy One!
Ephraim cherisheth the wind—he followeth the east wind.
All the day long he increaseth lies and falsehoods.
He maketh a covenant with Assyria—oil is carried to Egypt.
The Lord has a case also against Judah. He will punish **Jacob** for his ways,
According to his doings, will He recompense him.

In the womb he seized his brother's heel! By his power
he strove with God;
Yea, he strove with the angel, he was mighty;
He wept, and made supplication unto Him.
He found Him in Bethel—there He spake unto him,
Even the Lord God of Hosts! The Lord is His memorial.
Oh! turn then to thy God! Be merciful and just,
Yea, wait on thy God continually.

As for Canaan—balances of deceit are his—he loveth
to oppress.
Yet says Ephraim, "I am rich—I have got me much
wealth:
As for my labours—they shall find in me no iniquity, that
I have done."

But I am the Lord thy God, ever since the land of
Egypt;
I will yet make thee to dwell in booths, as in the solemn
feast.
I have also spoken by the prophets — visions have I
multiplied!
I have used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.
Yet there's iniquity in Gilead! Surely they are vanity!
In Gilgal the rulers sacrifice — yea, their altars are as
heaps in the furrows of the field!

A Spiritual Lesson.

Now Jacob had fled into the land of Syria.
Yea, Israel served for a wife, and for a wife he kept sheep.
And by a **prophet** the Lord brought Israel out of Egypt.
Yea, by a prophet was he preserved.

Yet Ephraim provoked Him to anger—most bitterly!
His blood then He shall leave upon him; his reproach shall his Lord send back upon him.

(Ch. xi. 12; xii. 1-14.)

Ephraim's Greatness and Fall.

When Ephraim spake, there was trembling! He was great in Israel!
But he trespassed in the matter of Baal, and died.
And now they increase in sin—they have molten images of silver;
Idols like unto themselves—all made by the workman!
They say to them—"Let the **sacrificers** of men kiss the calves!"

Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud—as the dew that early goeth away!
As the chaff driven by the whirlwind from the floor—as the smoke from the lattice.
Yet I am the Lord, thy God from the land of Egypt!
And thou knowest no God, but Me; for there is no Saviour beside Me!

I knew thee in the wilderness—in a dry parched land.
When they were fed, they were filled! Yea, they were filled,
And their heart was exalted, and they have forgotten Me.

Therefore, I am as a lion unto them! As a leopard by the way, I watch them!
I will meet them as a bereaved bear, I will rend their breast!
There I'll devour them like a she-lion; as a wild beast will I tear them.

O Israel—this is thy ruin—thou art against Me, thine help!
Where is thy king that can save thee, in all thy cities?
Where thy judges? of whom thou saidst—"Give me a king and princes!"
I gave thee a king in My wrath—I took him away in My anger.
Ephraim's iniquity is bound up: his sin—'tis stored up.
Sudden sorrows shall come upon him! He is an unwise son.
At the time, he cometh not to the birth!

I will ransom them from the power of Sheol; from death I will redeem them.
O death! Where are thy plagues? O Sheol! where thy destroying power?
Change of Purpose is hid from Mine eyes.
(Ch. xiii. 1-14.)

The Divine Judgment on Samaria (724-722 B.C.).

Though he be fruitful among his brethren, an east wind shall blow upon him;
A wind of the Lord shall come from the Desert—his spring shall be dried up;
His fountain shall be dried—it shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels;
Samaria shall be punished—for she hath rebelled against her God.
They shall fall by the sword! Their infants shall be dashed in pieces!
And their women with child—they shall be torn asunder!
(Ch. xiii. 15, 16.)

An Exhortation to Return.

O Israel! Return unto the Lord, thy God! Thou hast
fallen by thine iniquity!
Take with you words, and turn to the Lord. Say unto Him,
"Wholly take away iniquity, and receive the good.
And we shall render our praises as sacrifices of bullocks."
Assyria—he saves us not! on **horses**—we will not ride!
To the work of our hands no more shall we say—"Ye are
our Gods!
For in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy."

The Divine Reception.

"I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely!
For Mine anger—it is turned away from him!
I will be as the dew unto Israel. He shall grow as the **lily**.
He shall cast forth his roots like Lebanon.
His saplings shall spread—His beauty shall be as the
olive-tree.
And his fragrance shall be as Lebanon.
They that dwell in his shade shall return.
They shall revive as the corn—they shall grow as the vine.
The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon—
As for Ephraim, "What shall he have to do with idols?"
As for Me, "I answer, and watch him."
(Ephraim) "I am like a green fir tree."
(God) "From Me is thy fruit found."

The Conclusion.

Who is wise, and he shall understand these things? Prudent, and he shall know them? For the Ways of the Lord are straight, and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall stumble therein. (Ch. xiv. 1-9.)

CHAPTER VI.

The Prophet Oded (734 B.C.).

The Invasion of Judah: the Prophet's Advice adopted.

Now the Children of Israel had carried away captives of their brethren a large number, men, women, sons, and daughters, and had taken away also much spoil from them, and had brought the spoil to Samaria. But a prophet of the Lord was there, whose name was **Oded**; and he went out before the army that returned to Samaria, and said unto them :—

"Behold! Because the Lord God was wroth with Judah, He hath delivered them into your hand, and ye have slain them in a rage that reacheth up to heaven! And now, ye purpose to keep the Children of Judah under, to make them bondmen and bondwomen unto you! Ah! are there not with you, with you also, sins against the Lord your God? Now, hear me therefore: and restore the captives again which ye have taken from your brethren; for the fierce wrath of the Lord is upon you."

Then certain of the heads of the Children of Ephraim, Azariah, the son of Johanan, Berechiah, the son of Meshillemoth, and Hezekiah, the son of Shallum, and Amasa, the son of Hadlai, stood up in the face of those, who came from the war, and said unto them :—

"Ye shall not bring the captives hither! For whereas ye have offended against the Lord already, ye intend to add more to our sins and to our trespass; for our trespass is great, and there is fierce wrath against Israel!"

So the armed men left the captives and the spoil before

the princes and all the people. Then the men, whose names were mentioned, rose up, and took the captives, and with the spoil clothed all that were naked among them, and arrayed them, and shod them, and gave them to eat and drink, and anointed them, and carried all the feeble of them upon asses, and brought them to **Jericho**, the city of palm-trees, to their brethren. Then they returned to Samaria. (2 Chron. xxviii. 8-15.)

CHAPTER VII.

PROPHECIES ON THE EVE OF SAMARIA'S FALL (726-722 B.C.) IN THE BOOK OF ZECHARIAH THE PROPHET, CHS. IX.-XI.

The First Burden.

A Promise to Zion in the time of Assyrian Invasion.

The Burden of the Word of the Lord. Upon the land of **Hadrach** and Damascus is its resting-place. The eyes of the Lord are over man, yea, over all the Tribes of Israel: over Hamath also, her border; over Tyre and Zidon, though they are very wise!

Tyre has built up for herself a stronghold; and heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets. Behold! the Lord will cast her out; He will smite her power over the sea; and she shall be destroyed with fire.

Ashkelon shall see, and fear! Gaza also, and be sorrowful. And Ekron! For her expectation shall be disappointed! And the king shall perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon shall not be inhabited! Yea, a bastard race shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the

Philistines! I will take away the blood out of his food, and the abominable things from between his teeth! And he that remaineth, even he, shall be for our God: and he shall be as a chieftain in Judah, and Ekron as a **Jebusite.** And I will encamp about Mine House as an army of defence, so that there shall be none that passeth by and returneth! And no oppressor shall pass through them any more; for now have I looked upon them with Mine eyes! (Zech. ix. 1-8.)

The Coming King.

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem!
Behold! thy King cometh unto thee—just, and victorious!
Lowly—even riding upon an ass—upon a colt, an ass's foal!
I am cutting off the chariot from Ephraim—the horse from Jerusalem!
The battle-bow shall be broken! He shall speak peace to the nations!
His dominion—'tis from sea to sea, from the **River** to the ends of earth!
As for thee also, because of My **Covenant** with thee,
I have delivered thy prisoners from the dungeons, which had no water.
"Return to the stronghold, O ye prisoners, for whom there is hope!"
Even to-day do I declare, "I will abundantly reward you."
For I have made Judah My bow; Ephraim, My arrows!
I will raise up thy sons, O Zion! (against thy sons, O **Javan**!)
I will make thee, as the sword of a mighty man.

The Lord shall be seen over them! His arrow shall fly as lightning!
The Lord God shall blow the trumpet! He shall rush as the whirlwind of the South!
The Lord of Hosts! He will defend them!
They shall destroy, and subdue with slingstones!
Yea, they shall drink, making a noise as through wine:
They shall be filled like the bowls, like the horns of the altar!
Yea, the Lord their God shall save them, in that day—the flock of His pasture!
For they shall be as the jewels of a crown—as a standard glittering over the land.
Oh, how great shall be their happiness! How great their splendour!
Corn shall make their young men glad; new wine—their maids! (Zech. ix. 9-17.)

An Exhortation to seek God. The sad Consequences of Apostasy.

Ask of the Lord rain, in the time of the latter rain—
The Lord who maketh the rain-clouds.
And He will give showers of early rain—to every one grass in the field.
For the **teraphim** have spoken falsely! The diviners have seen a lie!
They have told false dreams! They comfort in vain!
Therefore they go their own way as sheep—they are troubled!
For they have no shepherd. (Ch. x. 1, 2.)

The Punishment of Israel's kings set forth.

Against the Shepherds, My anger burns! Against the chief ones, I bring punishment.

The Lord of Hosts—He careth for His flock, the House of Judah!
He maketh them as His goodly horse—in the battle.
Out of Him cometh the corner-stone! Out of Him, the tent-peg!
Out of Him, the battle-bow! Out of Him, every warrior!

They shall be as mighty men, treading down the mire of the street in the battle,
They shall fight—for the Lord is with them! The horsemen shall be confounded.
And I will strengthen the House of Judah; I will save the House of Joseph.
I will restore them again, and have mercy upon them.
They shall be as if never cast off: for I the Lord their God, even I will hear them. (Ch. x. 3-7.)

The Benefits of Captivity.

Ephraim also shall be like a mighty man—their heart shall rejoice as through wine.
Yea, their children shall see it, and be glad—their heart shall rejoice in the Lord.
I will call for them, and gather them. For I have redeemed them,
Therefore they shall increase, as they increased before.
And I will sow them among the peoples. They shall remember Me—far away!
And they and their children shall live! They shall return again!
I will bring them out of Egypt, and gather them out of Assyria,
I will bring them to **Gilead**, and Lebanon—till there be no room left!
Yea, He shall pass through the sea of affliction! He shall smite the sea of storms!

All the deeps of the Nile—He shall dry them up!
The pride of **Assyria** shall be brought down: the sceptre of Egypt shall pass away.
I will strengthen them in the Lord! In His name shall they continue!
The oracle of the Lord. (Ch. x. 8-12.)

An Assyrian Invasion described.

Open thy doors, O Lebanon! Let the fire devour thy cedars!
Howl, O fir tree! For the cedar is fallen! The mighty are spoiled!
Howl, O oaks of Bashan! The dense forest is come down!
Hark! The howling of the shepherds—for their glory is spoiled!
Hark! The roaring of the young lions, for the thickets of Jordan are spoiled!

Thus saith the Lord, my God;—"Feed the flock, exposed to slaughter!
Those that seize them slay them, and hold themselves guiltless;
They that sell them, say, 'Blessed be the Lord!
For I am rich. Their own shepherds pity them not!'
For I will no more pity those who dwell in the land," saith the Lord.
But lo! I will deliver every one into his neighbour's hand—into the king's hand;
They shall smite the land, out of their hand I will not deliver them. (Zech. xi. 1-6.)

The Prophetic Obedience by Symbolic Actions.

Lo, I fed the flock exposed to slaughter, even you, O poor ones of the flock!

And I took unto me two staffs: the one I called "Graciousness," and the other I called "Union:" and I fed the flock. Three of the shepherds I cut off in one month: yea, my soul loathed them, and their soul also abhorred me. Then I said, "I will not feed you. That which dieth, let it die; and that which is to be cut off, let it be cut off, and let the rest eat every one the flesh of another."

Then I took my staff "Graciousness," and cut it asunder that I might break my covenant, which I had made with all the peoples. So it was broken in that day: and the poor of the flock, that gave heed to me, knew that it was the Word of the Lord. And I said unto them, "If ye think it good, give me my wages; but if not, forbear."

Then they weighed for my wages **thirty** pieces of silver.

And the Lord said unto me, "Cast into the **treasury** the goodly sum, that they valued my services at!"

Then I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the treasurer in the House of the Lord.

The Discarded Reunion of the Tribes.

I then cut asunder my other staff, "Union," that I might break the brotherhood between Judah and Israel.

And the Lord said unto me, "Take unto thee yet the instruments of a foolish shepherd. For lo! I will raise up a shepherd over the land, who shall not care for those that are perishing, nor seek after the scattered ones, nor heal that which is broken, nor feed that which is sound; but he shall eat the flesh of the fat ones, and tear their claws in pieces."

The Punishment of a False King.

Woe to the foolish shepherd—that leaveth his flock,
May the sword be upon his arm, and upon his right eye!
May his arm be clean dried up—his right eye utterly darkened! (Zech. xi. 7-17.)

Deliverance through Smiting.

Awake, O sword against My shepherd—against the man, that is my fellow!
Saith the Lord of Hosts.
Smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered;
And I will turn My hand upon the little ones,
It shall then be, that in the whole land, saith the Lord,
Two parts shall be cut off and die; the third part will be left therein,
Yea, I will bring the third part through the fire, refining them as silver is refined,
And I will try them as gold is tried,
They will call on My name; and I will hear them,
I will say: "They are My people." They shall say: "The Lord is my God." (Zech. xiii. 7-9.)

CHAPTER VIII.

The Prophecy of Micah (742-680 B.C.).

The Prophet's Period.

The Word of the Lord that came to **Micah**, the Morasthite, in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah: which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.

Part I.

THE CONDEMNATION OF VARIOUS SINS.

An Introductory Appeal.

Hear, all ye peoples! Hearken, O land, and all ye that dwell therein!
For the Lord God witnesseth among you—the Lord out of His holy Temple!
Lo! The Lord cometh out of His Place! Yea, He cometh down!
And He will tread upon the high places of the land.
The hills shall melt under Him! And the valleys shall be cleft!
As wax before the fire! As water poured out on a steep place!
For the transgression of Jacob is all this! For the sins of Israel's House!
What is the transgression of Jacob? Is it not Samaria herself?
And what is the sin of Judah? Is it not Jerusalem?
Ah! I shall make Samaria as a heap in a field, for the planting of a vineyard,
I shall throw her stones down into the valley—her foundations will I expose.

Then all her graven images shall be beaten to pieces, and all her hires shall be burned with fire, and all her idols will I lay desolate. For she gathered them of the hire of an harlot, and they shall again become the hire of an harlot.

(Ch. i. 1-7.)

Micah's Lamentation over the Ruin of the Country Districts.

For this I will wail and howl—I will go stript and naked!

I will wail like the jackals, and mourn like the ostriches!
Ah! her wounds cannot be cured! They reach even unto Judah!
Even unto the gate of My people, at Jerusalem, are they come!

Declare it not in **Gath**! Weep not over it in **Accho**!
In the house of Aphrah, roll not thyself in the dust!
Pass away, ye fair ones of Shaphir—even in nakedness!
She that dwelt in Zaanan hath not come forth!

The mourning of Beth-Ezel taketh away your shelter!
The dweller in Maroth waiteth eagerly for something good!
For trouble hath come down from the Lord, even to the gate of Jerusalem.
Let her of Lachish bind her chariot to the swift horse!

Here was the beginning of the sin to the Daughter of Zion.
The transgressions of Israel were found in thee.
For this thou shalt dower with presents Moresheth-Gath.
The houses of Achzib shall be a lie to the Kings of Israel.

Yet will I bring the heir to thee, thou inhabitress of Mareshah.
The glory of Israel shall come to Adullam.
Make thee bald, and shave thy head for thy loved children!
Enlarge thy baldness as the vulture—they are all carried away from thee! (Ch. i. 8-16.)

Special Sins detailed.

Woe to them that devise iniquity—that plan evil upon their beds!

With the morning light, as soon as they can, they do it!
They covet fields, and take them by violence! Houses—
they seize them!
Thus they oppress a man and his house—a man and his
heritage!

Therefore thus saith the Lord!
"Behold! against this people am I devising evil!
From which ye shall not escape, nor go haughtily!
For the time is evil."

In that day shall one take up against you a reproach, and lament over you with a doleful lamentation, saying:—

All is over! We are utterly spoiled!
He changeth the portion of my people! How doth He
remove it from me!
Unto the rebellious He divideth our fields!
Thou shalt have none to cast a lot in the congregation of
the Lord.

An Argument with False Leaders.

"Don't prophesy, O ye that prophesy!" they say. "They shall not prophesy concerning these things; they shall not make us ashamed."

"O House of Jacob! Is this only a name thou hast? Is the Spirit of the Lord confined? Are these His doings? Do not My words do good to him that walketh uprightly? But of late one setteth up My people against Me; as an enemy against him that is at peace with him, ye pull off the cloak; ye have cast out the widows of My people from their pleasant houses; from their children have ye taken away My glory for ever."

The Polluters of the Land called upon to leave.

Arise ye and depart, for this is not your rest; because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sore destruction.

If a man walking after the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, "I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink:" then such a one shall be the prophet of this people!

A Promise of Reunion and Restoration.

I will surely assemble all of thee, O Jacob; I will surely gather the remnant of Israel; I will put them together as sheep into a fold, as a flock in the midst of their pasture; they shall make a great noise by reason of the multitude of men. One that breaketh through is gone up before them; they break through, and pass on to the gate; yea, their king shall pass on before them, and the Lord shall be at their head. (Ch. ii. 1-13.)

An Address to the Rulers of Ephraim.

And I said,

"Hear, I pray you, O heads of Jacob, and ye princes of the
House of Israel—Is it not your duty to know justice?
Ye hate the good, and ye love the evil!
Ye pluck off their skin, and their flesh from off their bones;
Yea, ye eat the flesh of My people, ye flay their skin from
off them!
Ye break their bones, and cut them in pieces
As for the pot, and as flesh within the cauldron!
Then they cry unto the Lord, and He heareth them not!
He even hideth His face from them at such a time—
As they have behaved themselves ill in their doings.
(Ch. iii. 1-5.)

False Prophets Condemned.

Thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that made
My people err,
They bite with their teeth, and cry "Peace!"
Against him that giveth them not to eat, they declare
war.
Therefore night shall be unto you,—ye shall be without a
vision!
It shall be dark unto you—there shall be no divining!
The sun shall go down over the prophets—the day shall be
dark to them.
Yea, their seers shall be ashamed, and the diviners con-
founded.
Yea, they shall all cover their face—for there is no answer
from God.

The true Prophet's Position.

But as for me, truly I am filled with power by the Spirit of the Lord, and with justice, and with might to declare unto Jacob his transgressions, and to Israel his sin.

Hear this, I pray you, ye Heads of the House of Jacob, and ye Princes of the House of Israel that abhor justice, and pervert all equity; that build up Zion with violence, and Jerusalem with iniquity! The Heads thereof judge for a bribe; and the priests thereof teach for hire; and the prophets thereof divine for money! And yet they depend upon the Lord, and say, "Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us!"

The Certainty of Judgment even on Zion.

Therefore shall Zion on your account be plowed as a

field, and Jerusalen shall become heaps, and the Mountain of the House as heights covered with forests.

(Ch. iii. 5-12.)

Part II.

PROPHECIES CONCERNING A BETTER DAY.

An older Oracle.

But in the latter day it shall come to pass that
The Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established, at the head of the mountains.
It shall be exalted above the hills; yea, peoples shall flow unto it.
And many nations shall come, and say, "Come, let us go up
To the Mountain of the Lord, and to the House of the God of Jacob;
For He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His path."
For teaching shall go forth from Zion—the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
Yea, He shall judge among many peoples, and rebuke strong nations afar off.
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares: their spears into pruning-hooks.
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation: war they learn no more.
But they shall sit, every man under his vine, and his fig-tree;
None shall make them afraid.
The mouth of the Lord of Hosts hath spoken!

(Ch. iv. 1-4.)

The Present State, and what is to be in Jerusalem.

For all the peoples walk every one in the name of his

own god; let us then walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. In that day, saith the Lord, I will assemble her that halteth, and I will gather her that is driven out, and her that I have afflicted. Yea, I will make her that halteth a remnant, and her that was cast off a strong nation; and the Lord Himself shall reign over them in Mount Zion from henceforth, even for ever. And thou, **O Tower of the Flock**—thou **stronghold** of the Daughter of Zion, unto thee shall the former dominion come back; the kingdom shall come back to the Daughter of Jerusalem.

Despair in view of impending Danger.

Now why dost thou cry aloud? Is it because there is no king in thee? Is thy Counsellor perished? For pangs have taken thee as of a woman in travail! Ah! in pain thou must be! Thou must be in labour to bring forth, O Daughter of Zion, like a woman in travail! For now must thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field. (Yea, thou shalt even go to **Babylonia**.*) There shalt thou be delivered; there the Lord shall redeem thee from the hand of thine enemies.

Yea, now, many nations are gathering themselves against you, and they say: "Let her be defiled! Let our eye look upon Zion!" (Ch. iv. 5-11.)

The Divine Promise.

But these nations know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they His Counsel! For he hath gathered them only as the sheaves into the threshing-floor.

"Arise and thresh them, O Daughter of Zion!
For I will make thine horn iron, and thy hoof brass.

* An ancient gloss, perhaps.

Thou shalt beat in pieces many peoples.
Thou shalt dedicate their gain unto the Lord;
Their substance unto the Lord of the whole earth."
(Ch. iv. 12, 13.)

Address to Assyria.

Now thou mayest gather thyself in troops, O Daughter of troops! He hath laid siege against us; they have smitten the judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek!

But thou, **Bethlehem-Ephratah**—thou little one among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth that is to be ruler in Israel—such is My will: yea, his coming forth hath been determined from of old, from everlasting!

(Therefore, He giveth them up until the time that she that travaileth hath brought forth, and the remnant of his brethren return unto the Children of Israel.)

The Glory of the Predestined Ruler.

He shall stand, and feed them, in the Strength of the Lord;
In the majesty of the Name of the Lord his God;
And they shall abide; for now shall he be great to the ends of the earth.
Yea, this one shall be Peace.

Victory over Assyria.

When Asshur shall come into our land and tread in our palaces, then shall we raise against him seven shepherds; yea, eight princes among men: and they shall waste the land of Assyria with the sword, and the land of **Nimrod**, in the gates thereof.

Thus shall he deliver us from the Assyrian, when he

cometh into our land, and treadeth within our borders. Then the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples as a dew from the Lord, as the rain upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men.

Yea, the remnant of Jacob shall be among the nations, in the midst of many peoples, as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who when he goeth through, both treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and none can deliver. Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off!

The Reign of Peace and Purity.

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord;
I will cut off the horses out of thy midst, and destroy thy chariots;
I will cut off the cities of thy land, and throw down thy strongholds;
I will cut off witchcraft out of thine hand—thou shalt have no soothsayer;
Thy graven images also will I cut off, and thy pillars out of thy midst;
Thou shalt no more worship the work of thy hands!
I will pluck up thy Asherahs out of thy midst. So will I destroy thy foes.
Yea, I will execute vengeance in anger, and fury
Upon the nations, who have not been obedient to me!

(Ch. v. 1-15.)

Part III.

PROPHECIES OF A LATER DATE CONCERNING THE STATE OF RELIGION (ABOUT 680 B.C.).

The Divine Complaint.

Hear ye now what the Lord saith:

Arise! Contend thou before the mountains! Let the hills hear thy voice.

Hear ye, O mountains, the Lord's controversy! Ye lasting foundations of earth!

The Lord hath a controversy with His people—He will plead with Israel!

O My people! what have I done unto thee?

Wherein have I wearied thee? Testify against Me.

I brought thee up out of Egypt's land—I redeemed thee out of the house of bondage.

Yea, I sent before thee Moses, Aaron, and Miriam.

O My people! Remember what **Balak** king of Moab consulted!

Even what Balaam, son of Beor, answered him!

Remember what happened from **Shittim** to Gilgal;

That ye may know the righteous doings of the Lord!

The Human Response of Penitence.

Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God?

Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings—with calves of a year old?

Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil?

Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression—the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

The Divine Answer.

He hath showed thee, O man! what is good!
And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly,
To love mercy, and humbly to walk with thy God.

The Direct Declaration of the Divine Mind.

The Voice of the Lord is crying unto the city!
Wisdom is the fearing of His Name;
Hear the prophecy of the rod—even of Him who hath ordained it.

What God says.

Are treasures still being heaped up in the house of the wicked?
Is there still the short measure, that is an abomination to Me?
Canst thou be pure—with thy wicked balances—with the bag of false weights?
For thy rich men are full of violence—thy inhabitants have spoken lies.
Yea, their tongue is deceitful in their mouth.

Therefore, I will smite thee, and make thee sick unto death;
I will make thee desolate, because of thy sins.
Thou shalt eat, but not be satisfied—emptiness shall be in thee.
Yea, thou shalt remove thy goods, but not secure them;
That which thou securest will I give up to the sword;
Thou shalt sow, but thou shalt not reap;
Thou shalt tread the olives, but thou shalt not anoint thee with oil.

Thou shalt prepare the new wine, but thou shalt not drink wine.

The Reason why.

For the statutes of **Omri** are kept, and all the works of the House of Ahab; and ye walk in their counsels; that I should make you an astonishment, and your inhabitants an hissing. For this ye shall bear the reproach of the peoples. (Ch. vi. 1-16.)

The Prophet's Lamentation.

Woe is me! I am as when they gather the summer fruits—
As the grape-gleanings of the vintage!
There is no cluster to eat—no early fig, such as my soul desireth!
The godly are perished out of the land! There is none upright among men!
They all lie in wait to murder! They hunt every man his brother with a net!
Their hands are only bent on evil, to do it skilfully.
Both prince and judge—they ask for a reward!
The great man, he uttereth his wicked wish! So they arrange things.
For the good men, there are briers: for the upright, there are thorns.
The days of thy watchman—of thy visitation cometh. Ah! now shall be their perplexity! (Ch. vii. 1-4.)

Words of Warning in the Evil Day.

Trust ye not in a friend! Put no confidence in a trusted one!
Keep the doors of thy mouth from the wife of thy bosom!
The son dishonoureth his father — the daughter riseth against her mother—

The daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law:
A man's enemies are the men of his own house.
(Ch. vii. 5, 6.)

The Prophet's Attitude.

But as for me—I will look unto the Lord,
I will wait for the God of my salvation! My God will hear me.
Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy!
If I have fallen, I shall arise:
If I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light unto me!
I will bear the indignation of the Lord (because I have sinned against Him),
Until He plead my cause, and execute judgment for me.
He will bring me forth to the light! I shall behold His righteousness.
Then mine enemy shall see it, and shame shall cover her—
She that said to me, "Where is the Lord thy God?"
Mine eye shall look on her—now shall she be trodden down as mire in the streets. (Ch. vii. 7-11.)

The Day of Restoration.

The day for building thy walls—it comes! In that day shall the limit be removed!
In that day also they shall come to thee from Assyria—from the cities of Egypt.
Yea, from Egypt, even to the Euphrates! From sea to sea, from **mountain** to mountain!
But the land shall be desolated, because of them that dwell therein:
For the fruit of their doings.

A Prayer for Divine Shepherding.

Feed Thy people with Thy rod! The flock of Thine heritage!

Let them dwell a separated people in the wood, even in the midst of Carmel.
Let them feed in Bashan, and Gilead, as in days of old—
As in the days of thy coming out of Egypt, show him marvellous things.

The Divine Answer.

The nations shall see—they shall be ashamed of all their might!
They shall lay their hand upon their mouth—their ears shall be deaf.
They shall lick the dust, like a serpent! In their fortresses they shall tremble, as that which creeps on the earth!
They shall be afraid of the Lord our God! They shall fear because of Thee!

The Prophet's Joyful Conclusion.

Who is a God like unto Thee!
Thou that pardonest iniquity! That passest over the transgression of the Remnant of Thy people!
Retaining not Thine anger for ever! Delighting in mercy!
Turning in compassion upon us! Subduing all our iniquities!
Casting all our sins—into the depths of the sea!
Performing the truth to Jacob, the mercy promised to Abraham,
All that thou hast sworn to our fathers, since the days of old! (Ch. vii. 12-20.)

CHAPTER IX.

The Reigns of Manasseh and Amon.

A DARK DAY FOR JERUSALEM (698-642 B.C.).

The Idolatries of Manasseh (698-643 B.C.).

Manasseh was twelve years when he began to reign, and he reigned fifty and five years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah. And he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, after the abominations of the nations, which the Lord cast out before the Children of Israel. For he built up again the High Places, which Hezekiah, his father, had destroyed; and he reared up altars for Baal, and made Asherahs, as did Ahab, king of Israel, and worshipped all the host of heaven and served them. He also built altars in the House of the Lord, whereof the Lord had said, "In Jerusalem shall My Name be for ever!" And he built altars for all the host of heaven, in the two courts of the House of the Lord. And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the **Valley** of the **son of Hinnom**. He also used soothsayings, and divinations, and witchcraft, and appointed workers with familiar spirits, and wizards. He wrought much evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke Him to anger. Yea, he set a graven image of Asherah that he had made, in the House, of which God had said to David, and to Solomon, his son, "In this house and in Jerusalem, which I have chosen out of all the Tribes of Israel, will I put My Name for ever; neither will I any more remove the foot of Israel, from out of the land, which I have appointed for your fathers; if they will only take heed to do all that I have commanded them, according to the

whole law, that My servant Moses commanded them." But they hearkened not, and Manasseh made Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to err, and to do worse than the nations which the Lord had destroyed before the Children of Israel. (2 Kings xxi. 1-9; 2 Chron. xxxiii. 1-9.)

The Divine Rebuking.

Then the Lord spake by His servants the prophets, saying:

"Because Manasseh, king of Judah, hath done these abominations, and hath done more wickedly than the Amorites did, who were before him, and hath made Judah also to sin with his idols. Therefore, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'Behold! I am bringing such evil upon Jerusalem and Judah, that whosoever heareth of it, both his ears shall tingle; for I will stretch over Jerusalem the line already stretched over Samaria, and the plummet already applied to the House of Ahab, and I will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it, and turning it upside down; and I will forsake the remnant of Mine inheritance, and deliver them into the hand of their enemies; and they shall become a prey, and a spoil to all their enemies, because they have done that which is evil in My sight, and have provoked Me to anger, ever since the day their fathers came forth out of Egypt, even unto this day.'"

Moreover, Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another; beside his sin, wherewith he had made Judah to sin, in doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord.

(2 Kings xxi. 10-16.)

The Divine Chastisement (680 B.C.).

Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the King of Assyria, who took Manasseh away with hooks, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to **Babylon**. Now when he was in affliction he besought the Lord, his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto Him; and He was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom.

Then Manasseh knew that the Lord, He was God.

Manasseh's Changed Life.

Now after this he built an outer wall to the West of the City of David unto **Gihon** in the Valley, even to the entering in at the **Fish-gate**, and surrounded Ophel, and raised it up to a very great height. He also put captains of war in all the fortified towns of Judah. And he took away the strange gods, and the idols out of the House of the Lord, and out of Jerusalem, and cast them out of the City. And he repaired the altar of the Lord, and sacrificed thereon peace-offerings, and thank-offerings, and commanded Judah to serve the Lord God of Israel. Nevertheless the people did sacrifice still on the High Places unto the Lord their God only. (2 Chron. xxxiii. 11-17.)

The King's Death.

And Manasseh slept with his fathers, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the **garden** of Uzza; and Amon his son reigned in his stead. (2 Kings xxi. 18).

The Reign of Amon (643-642 B.C.).

Amon was two-and-twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. And his

mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah. But he did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, as his father Manasseh had done; and he walked in all the ways that his father walked in. He also served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them; and he forsook the Lord God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the Lord. (He humbled not himself before the Lord, as Manasseh, his father, had done, but trespassed more and more.) Then the servants of Amon conspired against him, and slew the king in his own house. But the people of the land slew all them that had conspired against King Amon, and the people of the land made **Josiah**, his son, king in his stead. And he was buried in his sepulchre in the garden of Uzza; and Josiah, his son, reigned in his stead. (2 Kings xxi. 19-26: 2 Chron. xxxiii. 21-25.)

CHAPTER X.

The Prophecy of Nahum.

(700-650 B.C.)

CONCERNING THE FALL OF NINEVEH.

An Oracle concerning Nineveh.

The book of the Vision of **Nahum** the **Elkoshite**.

The Righteous Character of God.

The Lord is a God that is jealous—that vindicates Himself!

The Lord—He vindicates Himself: He is full of anger!

The Lord vindicates Himself as to His adversaries—He watcheth His enemies.

The Lord is slow to anger! Great in power! Yet He will not altogether acquit!

The Lord's way—'tis in the whirlwind and the storm—the clouds are the dust of His feet.
He rebuketh the sea, and it drieth up! He drieth up all the rivers!
Bashan languisheth, and Carmel! The flower of Lebanon languisheth!
The hills quake before Him! The high places melt!
The land smokes before Him: yea, the world, and all that dwell therein!
Who can stand before His indignation? Who can abide the fierceness of His anger?
His fury is poured out like fire! The rocks are thrown down by him!
The Lord is good! He is a stronghold in the day of trouble! Yea, He knoweth them that trust in Him!
(Ch. i. 1-7.)

The Ruin of Nineveh described.

But with an overflowing flood, He makes an utter end of the place
Of His enemies: yea, unto darkness hath He driven them!
What do you think of the Lord? Ah! He will make a full end.
Trouble shall not rise up a second time!
For though they be like tangled thorns—though they be drunken with drink,
They shall be devoured as stubble fully dry.

One cometh out of thee, imagining evil against the Lord, counselling wickedness.
Thus saith the Lord:
Though they be great in strength, and very many;
Yet they shall be cut down, and he shall pass away.

Though I have afflicted thee, I will afflict thee no more!
For now will I break his yoke from off thee. Yea, I will burst thy bonds in sunder.

The End of Sennacherib.

But the Lord hath given a commandment concerning thee:
No more of thy name shall be sown!
Out of the house of thy god will I cut off the graven and the molten image,
I will make it thy grave; for thou art found light!

An Exclamation of Joy.

Behold! Upon the mountains the feet of him that bringeth good tidings—that publisheth peace! O Judah, keep thy solemn feasts! Perform thy vows! For the wicked one shall no more pass through thee—he is utterly cast off!

(Ch. i. 8-15.)

The Capture of Nineveh set forth. The Siege (609 B.C.).

He that dasheth in pieces is come up before thy face!
Keep the munition! Watch the way!
Make thy loins strong! Fortify thy power mightily!

A Word of Hope and Explanation.

For the Lord bringeth again the excellency of Jacob, as the excellency of Israel. For the emptiers have emptied them out, and marred their vine branches!

The Panic in Nineveh.

The shield of his mighty men is made red; the valiant men are in scarlet!
The chariots flash with steel in the day of his preparation!
And the spears are made to quiver!
The chariots rush in the streets! They jostle against one another in the broad ways!

They seem like torches—they run like the lightnings!
He bethinks himself of his worthies! They stumble in their walk!
They make haste to the wall thereof! The siege tower is prepared!
The gates of the rivers are opened! The palace is dissolved!
Yea, it is so **decreed**! She is uncovered! She is carried away!
Her handmaids mourn, as with the voice of doves, tabering on their breast.
Nineveh has been of old! Like a pool of water! Yet they shall flee away!
"Stand, stand," shall they cry—but none shall look back:
Take ye the spoil of silver: take the spoil of gold!
For there is none end of the stores—there is abundance of all precious vessels!
She is emptied, made void, and wasted!
The heart melteth, and the knees smite together!
Much pain is in every loin—every face loses its colour.
(Ch. ii. 1-10.)

An Illustration.

Where is the den of the lions? Where the feeding place of the young lions?
Where the lion, the lioness, the lion's cub walked, without fear!
Where's the lion that tore in pieces enough for his whelps, and strangled for his lionesses?
That filled his den with prey, and his caves with booty!

The Divine application.

Behold! I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts, for I will burn thy chariots in the fire, and the sword shall devour

thy young lions; yea, I will cut off thy prey from off the earth, and the voice of thy ambassadors shall no more be heard! (Ch. ii. 11-13.)

The Reason and Necessity of Nineveh's Fall.

Woe to the bloody city! 'Tis all full of lies—of robbery!
The prey departeth not.
There's the noise of a whip, and the noise of the rattling of wheels!
The noise of prancing horses, and of rushing chariots!
Horsemen mounting! The glitter of swords! The flash of spears!
A multitude of slain! A great heap of carcases—
No end of corpses—they stumble upon their corpses!
Oh! the multitude of whoredoms
Of the well-favoured harlot, the mistress of witchcrafts!
That selleth nations through her whoredoms, and families through her witchcrafts.

Behold! I am against thee, saith the Lord of Hosts! I will uncover thee,
I will show the nations thy nakedness, and the kingdoms thy shame.
Yea, I will cast abominable filth upon thee, and make thee vile, and will set thee as a gazing-stock.
And it shall come to pass that all they that look upon thee shall flee from thee, and say:— (Ch. iii. 1-6.)

A Lamentation over Nineveh.

Nineveh is laid waste! Who will bemoan her?
Whence shall I seek comforters for her?
Art thou better than **No-Amon**, enthroned on the Nile rivers?

That had waters round her—whose rampart and wall was the sea!
Ethiopia and Egypt were her strength—and it was infinite!
Put and **Lubim** were her helpers.
Yet was she carried away! She went into captivity!
Her young children also were dashed in pieces, at the top of all the streets!
They cast lots for her honourable men! All her great men were bound in chains!

Return to Prophecy of coming Ruin.

Thou also shalt be drunken! Thou shalt faint away!
Thou also shalt seek a place of refuge from the enemy!
All thy strongholds shall be like fig trees, with first ripe figs;
If they be shaken, they shall fall at once into the mouth of the eater.
Behold! thy people in the midst of thee—they are women!
The gates of thy land are set wide open to thy enemies.
The fire hath devoured thy bars!

Draw thee water for the siege! Fortify thy stronghold!
Go unto the clay and tread the mortar! Make hot the brick kiln!
There shall the fire devour thee! The sword shall cut thee off!
It shall eat thee up, like the cankerworm!
Make thyself many as the cankerworm! Make thyself many as the locust!
Thou hast multiplied thy merchants above the stars of heaven!
The cankerworm spoileth and fleeth away!
Thy crowned ones are as locusts! Thy captains as great grasshoppers!

They camp in the hedges, in the cold of the day.
When the sun ariseth, they flee away,
The place where they are—'tis not known!

The end of Nineveh.

Thy shepherds slumber, O king of Assyria! Thy nobles lie buried!
Thy people are scattered on the mountains! No man gathers them!
There is no healing of thy hurt! Thy wound is grievous!
All that hear the news of thee clap their hands over thee!
For upon whom has not thy wickedness passed continually?

CHAPTER XI.

The Prophecy of Zephaniah.

AT THE CLOSE OF AMON'S REIGN, 642 B.C.

The Prophet and his Date.

The Word of the Lord, which came unto Zephaniah, the son of Cushi, the son of Gedaliah, the son of Amariah, the son of Hezekiah in the days of Josiah, the son of Amon, king of Judah.

A foreboding of Terrible Punishment, prior to Josiah's Reformation.

I am utterly consuming all things from off the earth, saith the Lord!
I will consume man and beast! I will consume the birds of the air!
And the fish of the sea, and the stumbling blocks, even the wicked!

Yea, I will cut off man from the earth, saith the Lord.
I am stretching out My hand upon Judah! Upon those
that dwell in Jerusalem!
I am cutting off, from this place, the remnant of Baal,
The name of the **Chemarim** with the priests.
Them that worship the host of heaven on the housetops!
Even them that worship, who swear by the Lord, and by
their **Moloch**;
Those that are turned back from the Lord;
Those that have not sought the Lord, nor enquired of Him!

The Day of the Lord.

Hold thy peace before the Lord God! For the day of the
Lord is at hand!
For the Lord hath prepared a sacrifice! He hath prepared
His called ones!
And it shall come to pass, in the day of the Lord's sacrifice,
That I will punish the princes and king's children,
Yea, all such as are clothed with foreign apparel!
In the same day, also, will I punish those that leap over
the threshold,
Who fill the house of their master with violence and deceit.

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord:
Hark! A cry from the Fish-gate—a howling from the
Second Quarter!
And a great crashing from the hills!
Howl! Ye inhabitants of **Maktesh**!
For all the people of **Canaan** are cut down! All they that
bore silver are cut off!
And it shall come to pass at that time that I will search
Jerusalem with candles; and I will punish the men that

are settled on their lees: that say in their heart: "The Lord will not do good, neither will He do evil."

Yea, their goods shall become a booty, their houses a desolation!

They shall also build houses, but not inhabit them!

They shall plant vineyards, but not drink the wine thereof!

The great day of the Lord is near! 'Tis near! It cometh quickly!

Hark! The day of the Lord! The mighty man crieth out there bitterly!

That day—'tis a day of wrath! A day of trouble and distress!

A day of wasting, and desolation! Of darkness and gloom!

A day of clouds, and darkness! Of trumpet and alarm!

Against the fortified towns! Yea, against the high towers!

For I am bringing distress upon men! They shall walk like blind men!

Because they have sinned against the Lord.

Their blood shall be poured out as dust! Their flesh, as dung!

Their silver and their gold—these shall not avail for deliverance in the day of the Lord's wrath!

For the whole land shall be devoured with the fire of His jealousy!

He maketh a speedy riddance of all that dwell in the land!

(Ch. i. 1-18).

A Call to Repentance addressed to Jerusalem.

Gather yourselves together! Yea, gather together, thou nation that hath no shame!

Before the decree bringeth forth (like chaff the day passeth
away)!
Before the fierce anger of the Lord cometh upon you!
Before the day of the Lord's anger cometh upon you!
Seek ye the Lord, all ye meek of the land, who have wrought
His will;
Seek righteousness: seek meekness! It may be ye shall
be hidden,
In the day of the Lord's anger. (Ch. ii. 1-3.)

The Devastation of that Day described.

1. Against the Philistines.

Gaza shall be forsaken! Ashkelon shall be a desolation!
Ashdod at noonday shall be driven out! Yea, Ekron shall
be rooted out!
Alas! For those that dwell on the sea coast! The nation
of the **Cherethites!**
The Word of the Lord—'tis against you, O Canaan! Thou
land of the Philistines!
I will destroy thee, so that there shall be no inhabitant!
And the sea-coast shall be pastures: huts for shepherds,
folds for flocks!
Yea, the coast shall be for the remnant of the House of
Judah! They shall feed there!
In the houses of Ashkelon shall they lie down, in the
evening!
For the Lord their God shall visit them, and bring again
their captivity!

2. Against Moab and Ammon.

I have heard the reproach of Moab—the revilings of
Ammon's Children!

Wherewith they have reproached My people, and proudly violated their border!

Therefore, as I live! saith the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel:

"Surely Moab shall be as Sodom! The Children of Ammon as Gomorrah!

A possession for nettles, and salt pits—yea, a perpetual desolation!

The residue of My people shall spoil them! The remnant of My people shall possess them!"

This shall they have in the place of their pride!

For they have despised, and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of Hosts.

The Lord will be terrible unto them! For He will famish all the gods of the earth!

And men shall worship Him, each one from his own place —all the regions of the nations!

3. **Against Ethiopia and Assyria.**

Ye Ethiopians also! Ye shall be slain with the sword!

Yea, He stretcheth out His hand against the north! He destroys Assyria!

He makes Nineveh a desolation—dry like a wilderness!

Flocks shall lie down in the midst of her—all the beasts in herds!

Both the pelican and the porcupine shall lodge on her door posts!

Their voice shall sing in the windows! There is desolation on the thresholds!

For He hath laid bare the cedar work!

This the rejoicing city! She that dwelt carelessly!

That said in her heart—"I am, and there is none else"!

How is she become a desolation! A place for beasts to lie down in!
Every one that passeth by her hisseth, and wags his hand.
(Ch. ii. 4-15.)

Warning Words to Jerusalem.

Alas! For the rebellious, and polluted—the oppressing city!
She obeyed not the Voice! She received not correction!
She trusted not in the Lord! She drew not near to her God!
Her princes within her—they are roaring lions;
Her judges—they are evening wolves:
They lay nothing aside for the morrow!
Her prophets—they are light, and treacherous persons!
Her priests—they have polluted the Holy Place—they have done violence to the law!
The Lord within her — He is righteous: He does no unrighteousness!
Morning by morning—He bringeth His justice to light:
He faileth not! But the unrighteous knoweth no shame!
I have cut off the nations! Their towers are desolate!
I have made their streets waste—none passeth by them!
Their cities are destroyed! There's not a man in them! Not one inhabitant!

I said, "Surely thou wilt fear Me! Thou wilt receive correction"!
Then her dwelling would not be cut off—as I had appointed unto her.
But they rose early; they corrupted all they did!

Therefore wait for Me, saith the Lord!
For the day that I rise up, to the prey!

For there is justice! It shall gather the nations, and assemble the kingdoms!
To pour upon them Mine indignation, even all my fierce anger!
For all the earth shall be devoured, with the fire of My jealousy!

After Judgment, Restoration.

And then will I give to the Tribes a purified lip,
That they may all call upon the Name of the Lord,
To serve Him with one consent.

From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, those that pray to Me,
The daughter of My dispersed, shall bring an offering to Me!
In that day thou shalt not be ashamed for all thou hast done,
Wherein thou hast transgressed against Me,
For then I will take out of thy midst thy proudly exulting one;
Yea, thou shalt no more be haughty upon My Holy Mountain.
But I will leave in thy midst an humbled, and poor people,
And they shall trust, in the Name of the Lord!
Those of Israel that are left shall not do evil, or speak lies.
A deceitful tongue shall not be found in their mouth.
Yea, they shall feed and lie down! No one shall make them afraid! (Ch. iii. 1-13.)

A Call to Grateful Joy.

Sing, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O **Israel!**
Be glad, and rejoice with all thine heart, O daughter of Jerusalem!
The Lord hath taken away thy punishment! He hath cast out thine enemy!

The King of Israel, even the Lord! He is in thy midst!
Thou shalt not see misfortune any more!

In that day shall it be said to Jerusalem, "Fear thou not!"
And to Zion, "Let not thine hands be slack!"
The Lord thy God is in thy midst! Mighty to save!
He will rejoice over thee with joy! He will rest in His love!
He will joy over thee with singing!

I will gather those that sorrow, who are far from the solemn assembly!
Those of thee who were burdened by thy reproach.
Lo! at that time I will punish all that afflict thee;
I will save her that is lame! I will gather her that was driven out!
Yea, I will make them a praise, and a name, in every land where they have been put to shame.
At that time will I bring you—at that time I will gather you.
I will make you a name, and a praise, among all people of the earth,
When I turn back your captivity, before your eyes, saith the Lord. (Ch. iii. 14-20.)

CHAPTER XII.

The Prophet Habakkuk.

(600 B.C.)

A PROPHECY OF THE COMING JUDGMENTS.

The Burden which Habakkuk the Prophet did see.

The Prophet on his Watch Tower.

O Lord! How long shall I cry, and Thou wilt not hear?
How long shall I cry to Thee of wrong-doing, and Thou wilt not help?

Why dost Thou show me iniquity? Why beholdest Thou grievance?
Spoiling, and violence are before me! There is strife, and contention raised!
The law is slacked! And justice is never executed!
The wicked compasseth the righteous; yea, justice is perverted!

The Coming Punishment. The Chaldeans Described.

Look among the nations! Yea, consider, and wonder much!
For there is a work going on in your days! Ye will not believe, when it is told you!
For lo! I am raising up the **Chaldeans**—that bitter, and headstrong nation
That marcheth through the breadth of the earth—to possess dwelling-places that are not theirs!
They are terrible, and dreadful!
From **themselves** their judgment, and dignity proceed!
Their horses are swifter than leopards! They are fiercer than evening wolves!
Their horsemen galop on—yea, their horsemen come from afar!
They fly, as the eagle that hasteth to devour!
They come up to do violence! Their faces are set towards the **East!**
Yea, they gather their captives, as the sand!
They scoff at kings—yea, princes are held in scorn by them!
They deride every stronghold! They make mounds, and take it!
He sweepeth by, yea, passeth along, as the wind!
But he becomes guilty—this his power is his god!

(Ch. i. 1-11.)

A Prayer unto the true God.

Art thou not from everlasting, O Lord, my God! My Holy
One? Thou diest not!
O Lord, Thou hast ordained them for the execution of
justice!
Thou, O Rock, hast established them for our correction!
Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil—thou canst not
look on wrong!
Why then lookest Thou on the treacherous? Why holdest
Thou Thy peace
When the wicked man swalloweth up him that is more
righteous than he?
Why makest Thou men as the fish of the sea?
As the creeping things, that have no ruler over them?
They take them all up with their hook—they catch them
with their net.
They gather them in their dragnet; therefore they rejoice,
and shout.
They sacrifice unto their net! They burn incense unto
their dragnet!
Because by these things their portion is fat, and their meat
plenty!
Shall they therefore empty their net, and cease not to slay
the nations?
I will stand upon my watch, I will set me upon my tower.
I will watch to see what He will say unto me,
Yea, what He shall answer to my complaint.

(Ch. i. 12-ii. 1.)

The Divine Answer.

And the Lord answered me, and said,

"Write the vision, yea, make it plain on tablets that it may be read swiftly. For the vision yet pointeth to a fixed

time, yea it speaketh of the end, and lieth not. Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, and it will not be behind time."

The Divine Oracle.

Behold his soul is lifted up within him: it is not upright!
But the righteous shall live by his faithfulness.

The Character of the Chaldeans and their Punishment.

Yea, also, wine is a deceiver. The proud man! He abideth not at home!
He enlargeth his desire as the grave: as death, he cannot be satisfied.
He gathereth unto him all nations, and heapeth unto him all peoples!
Shall not all these take up a taunt against him, and a reproach?

The First Woe.

And say, "Woe to him that increaseth that which is not his!"
How long! Woe to him that ladeth himself with pledges!
Shall they not rise up suddenly, that shall oppress thee?
And awake, that shall vex thee, and thou shalt be for booty unto them?
Because thou hast spoiled many nations, all that remain of the peoples shall spoil thee.
Because of the blood thou hast shed, because of the wrong done to the land,
Done to the city, and to all that dwell therein!

The Second Woe.

Woe to him that gaineth evil gains for his house!
To set his house on high—to be delivered from the reach of evil!

Thou hast consulted only to bring shame to thy house
By cutting off many peoples! Yea, thou hast endangered thine own soul!
For the stone crieth out of the wall! The beam out of the woodwork answers it!

The Third Woe.

Woe to him that buildeth a town with blood, and stablisheth a city by wrong-doing!
Behold! Is it not of the Lord that the peoples labour, only for the fire?
And the nations weary themselves, only for vanity?
For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God—as the waters cover the sea!

The Fourth Woe.

Woe to him that giveth his neighbour drink! that addeth his poison to it!
That maketh him drunken, that he may be ashamed!
Thou shalt be filled with shame instead of glory!
Thou shalt drink thyself, and be ashamed!
The cup of the Lord's right hand shall be turned against thee!
And foulness shall be upon all thy glory!
The wrong done to Lebanon shall cover thee! The cruelty to the beasts, it shall make thee afraid!
Because of the blood thou hast shed! Because of the wrong done to the land!
Done to the city, and to all that dwell therein!

The Woe on Idolatry: The Fifth Woe.

Woe to him that saith to a piece of wood, "Awake!"
To a dumb stone, "Arise!" Can this teach?

Behold! it is laid over with gold and silver! There is no breath at all in it!

What profits the graven image to the maker, that hath graven it?

The molten image, and he that teacheth lies, that the maker of it, the maker of dumb idols, trusteth therein?

The Conclusion.

But the Lord is in His Holy Temple.
Let all the earth keep silence before Him!

(Ch. ii. 2-20.)

A Psalm of Holy Confidence.

A Prayer of Habakkuk the Prophet. (To the tune of the **Shigionoth**.)

O Lord! I have heard about Thee, and I am afraid!
O Lord! Revive Thy Work, in the midst of the years!
In the midst of the years, make it known!
In wrath, remember mercy!

God cometh from **Teman**! The Holy One from Mount **Paran**!

His glory covers the heavens—the earth is full of His praise!

His brightness is as the light! It came forth as rays from His Hand:

There was the hiding of His Power!

Before Him goeth the pestilence! Yea, burning coals go forth at His feet!

He stands, and measures the earth! He looks, and alarms the nations!

The everlasting mountains burst! The ancient hills bow! Even the ancient paths before Him!

I see the tents of Cushan in affliction—the curtains of
Midian tremble!
Is the Lord displeased with the hills? Is He angry with
the rivers?
Is His wrath upon the sea? That Thou dost ride upon
Thine horses
Upon Thy chariots of deliverance?

Thy bow is made quite bare! The chastisements of Thy
Word are sworn!
Thou dost cleave the earth with rivers! The mountains
see Thee, and tremble!
The flood passes by! The deep utters its voice! It lifteth
up its hands on high!
The sun, the moon—they stand still in their place!
At the light of Thine arrows (as they went), at the flash of
Thy glittering spear!
Thou marchest through the land in wrath! Thou threshest
the nations in anger!
Thou goest forth to deliver Thy people—to save Thine
anointed!
Thou smitest off the head from the house of the wicked!
Laying bare the foundations unto the rock!
Thou piercest with his own spears the head of his warriors;
(Those who came out as a whirlwind to scatter me:
Their joy was to devour the poor secretly).

Thou treadest the sea, the surge of mighty waters with Thy
horses.
When I heard, I trembled within: my lips quivered at the
Voice!
Rottenness entered into my bones, and I trembled in my
place.

O that I might rest, waiting for the day of trouble.
When it cometh up against the people, invading them in troops!

A Beautiful Conclusion.

Although the fig-tree blossom not, nor fruit be on the vine;
The labour of the olive fail, and fields yield no return;
The flock be from the fold cut off,—no herd be in the stalls;
Yet in the Lord will I rejoice. I will joy in the God of my salvation!
The Lord God is my strength! My feet He maketh swift as hinds'!
He maketh me to walk upon mine high places!

(To the Chief Singer on the stringed instruments.)

(Ch. iii. 1-19.)

CHAPTER XIII.

Prophecies Concerning the Approaching Overthrow of Jerusalem (B.C. 590).

FOUND IN ZECHARIAH'S PROPHECY AS BURDEN II.

The Burden of the Word of the Lord concerning Jerusalem.

An Oracle of the Lord.

It is He who stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundation of the earth, and formed the spirit of man within him. Behold! I am making Jerusalem a cup of astonishment unto all the peoples round about, yea, even for **Judah** also, when it besieges Jerusalem. And Judah

also fights against Jerusalem! And the wealth of all the nations round about shall be gathered together—gold, and silver, and apparel in great abundance! For, in that day, I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all the peoples: all that try to lift it up shall be cut in pieces, yea, all the nations of the earth that be gathered together against it. In that day, saith the Lord, I will smite every horse with astonishment, and his rider with madness: yea, I will open Mine eyes upon the House of Judah, and will smite every horse of the peoples with blindness. Then the rulers of Judah shall say in their heart, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength, through the Lord of Hosts, their God."

In that day will I make the rulers of Judah like a burning fire among the wood, and like a lighted torch in a sheaf. And they shall devour all the peoples round about, on the right hand, and on the left hand. Then shall Jerusalem be inhabited again even in her own place at Jerusalem. The Lord also shall save the tents of Judah first, that the glory of the House of David, and the glory of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, be not magnified above that of Judah. In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that he that is feeble among them at that day, shall be as David; and the House of David shall be as God, as the Angel of the Lord before them. And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will seek to destroy all the nations, that come up against Jerusalem.

(Zech. xii. 1, 2; xiv. 14; xii. 3-9.)

A Day of Terrible Judgment Foretold.

Behold! The day of the Lord is coming! Thy spoil shall be divided within thee!

For I am gathering all nations against Jerusalem to battle.
The city shall be taken! the houses rifled! the women ravished!
The half of the city shall go into captivity, but the remnant of the people shall not be cut off from the city.
(Ch. xiv. 1-3.)

The Lord's Deliverance.

Then shall the Lord go forth, and fight against those nations, as when one fighteth in the day of battle. And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, on the East, and the Mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof, towards the East, and towards the West, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the North, and half of it toward the South. Then the valley of My mountains shall be blocked up, for the valley of My mountains shall be at **Beth-Ezel**; yea, it shall be blocked up as it was blocked up in the **earthquake** in the days of Uzziah, king of Judah. For the Lord my God is coming! All the Holy ones shall be with Thee!

And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall be no light; the heavenly bodies shall be darkened; for it shall be a unique day, known to the Lord, not a day, nor a night; and it shall come to pass that at the evening time it shall be light. And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem; half of them toward the **East**, and half of them toward the West; both in summer and in winter shall this be. And the Lord shall be King over all the land. In that day Jehovah shall be the One only, and His Name, the One. All the land shall become a plain from **Geba** to **Rimmon** in the south; and Jerusalem shall be

made high and dwell in safety, from **Benjamin's gate** unto the place of the first gate, unto the corner gate, and from the tower of **Hananeel** unto the king's winepresses: and people shall dwell in it, and there shall be no more curse, for Jerusalem shall dwell in safety. (xiv. 4-11.)

Judgment on Idolatrous Peoples.

And this shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord will smite all the peoples, that have fought against Jerusalem. Their flesh shall consume away, while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their sockets, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth. And it shall come to pass in that day, that a great panic from the Lord shall be among them; and they shall lay hold every one on the hand of his neighbour, and his hand shall rise up against the hand of his neighbour. And similar to this plague shall be the plague of the horse, of the mule, of the camel, and of the ass, and of all the animals that are in the tents. Then it shall come to pass that every one that is left of all the nations, which come up against Jerusalem, shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the **Feast of Tabernacles**. And it shall be that whosoever will not come up of all the families of the earth unto Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, even upon them shall be no rain. And if the family of **Egypt** go not up, and come not, upon them there shall be no rain, nay, upon them shall be the plague, wherewith the Lord shall smite the nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles. This shall be the punishment of Egypt, and the punishment of all nations that come not up to keep the Feast of Tabernacles.

(Ch. xiv. 12-19.)

Complete Consecration.

In that day shall there be upon the bells of the horses "Holiness unto the Lord."

Then the vessels in the Lord's House shall be like the bowls before the altar; yea, every common vessel in Jerusalem and in Judah shall be holy unto the Lord of Hosts; and all they that sacrifice shall come, and take of them, and boil their offerings therein. In that day there shall be no more a **Canaanite** in the House of the Lord of Hosts.

(Ch. xiv. 20, 21.)

A Great National Repentance.

For I will pour upon the House of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace, and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first-born. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem (as the mourning of **Hadad-rimmon** in the valley of **Megiddo**), and the land shall mourn, every family apart—the family of the House of David apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Nathan apart, and their wives apart; the family of the house of Levi apart, and their wives apart; the family of **Shimei** apart, and their wives apart; all the other families, every family apart, and their wives apart. In that day there shall be a fountain opened to the House of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin, and all defilement. (Zech. xii. 10-xiii. 1.)

A Moral and Spiritual Reformation.

And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols out of the

land; and they shall be no more remembered; and I will also cause the prophets, and the spirit of defilement to pass out of the land. And it shall come to pass that when any one shall prophesy, then his father, and his mother shall say unto him, "Thou shalt not live; for thou speakest lies in the Name of the Lord." Then his father and his mother shall thrust him through when he prophesieth. And it shall come to pass in that day that the prophets shall be put to shame, every one through his vision, when he hath prophesied. They shall no more wear the prophet's hairy mantle to deceive, but shall say, "I am not a prophet. I am an husbandman, for one hath used me as his slave from my youth."

Then one shall ask him, "What are these wounds on thy breast?"

And he shall answer: "These are the wounds, with which I was wounded in the house of my loved friends."

(Zech. xii. 2-6.)

CHAPTER XIV.

The Prophecy of Obadiah.

(about 587 B.C.)

THE DESTRUCTION OF EDOM.

The Vision of Obadiah.

Thus saith the Lord **concerning Edom.**

We have heard a revelation from the Lord, and an ambassador is sent among the nations:—"Arise ye, and let us up against her in battle."

Edom's Boasting Rebuked.

Behold! I have made thee small among the nations: thou art greatly despised.

The pride of thine heart hath deceived thee, thou that dwellest in the clefts of the rock;

Whose habitation is high—that saith in thine heart, Who shall bring me down to the ground?

Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and make thy nest among the stars,

Thence will I bring thee down, saith the Lord!

If thieves come to thee, if robbers by night (how art thou cut off!)

Will they not steal, till they have enough?

If the grape-gatherers come to thee, will they not leave some gleanings?

How are the things of Esau searched out! How are his hidden things sought out!

All the men in alliance with thee have brought thee on thy way, even to the border.

The men, that were at peace with thee, have deceived thee and prevailed against thee.

They have laid a snare under thee—there is no understanding of it!

Shall I not in that day, saith the Lord, destroy the wise out of Edom,

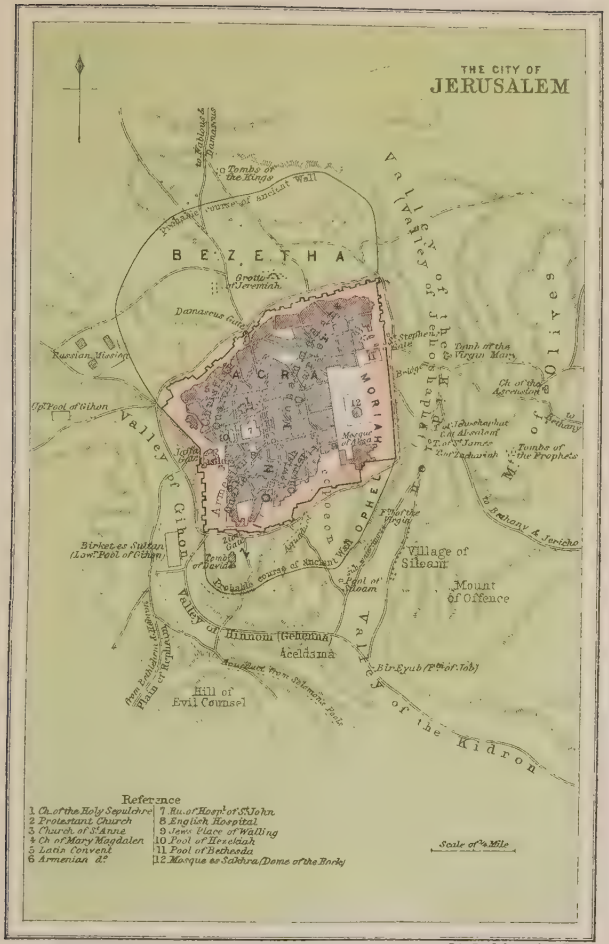
And understanding out of the **Mount of Esau**?

Thy mighty men shall be dismayed, O **Teman**,

So that every one of the Mount of Esau may be cut off by slaughter!

For violence done to thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee:

Yea, thou shalt be cut off for ever!



John Bartholomew & Co. Edin.r

Edom's Cruel Attitude on Jerusalem's Fall.

In the day that thou stoodest aloof—when strangers carried away his substance,

When foreigners entered into his gates, and cast lots upon Jerusalem, thou wast as one of them!

Ah! thou shouldest not have looked with joy on the day, that thy brother became a stranger!

Thou shouldest not have rejoiced over the Children of Judah, in the day of their destruction!

Thou shouldest not have spoken proudly in the day of their distress!

Thou shouldest not have entered into the gate of My people, in the day of their calamity!

Thou shouldest not have looked with joy on their affliction, in the day of their calamity!

Thou shouldest not have laid hands on their substance, in the day of their calamity!

Thou shouldest not have stood in the crossway, to cut off those that escaped.

Thou shouldest not have delivered up those of his, that remained in the day of their distress.

The Divine Punishment.

For the day of the Lord is near! It is upon all the nations!

As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee!

As thou hast dealt out to others, so shall it come back upon thine own head.

For as ye have drunk upon My Holy Mountain, so shall the nations drink on thee continually.

Yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had never been!

A Promise of Restoration for the whole People.

But upon Mount Zion shall be a remnant, and it shall be holiness.

Yea, the House of Jacob shall possess their own again!

For the House of Jacob shall be a fire—the House of Joseph a flame,

And the House of Esau—stubble: they shall kindle in them and devour them.

There shall not be any remaining of the House of Esau—for the Lord hath spoken it.

They of the **Negeb** shall possess the Mount of Esau: they of the Lowland, the Philistines!

And they shall possess the hill country of Ephraim, and the fields of Samaria.

And Benjamin shall possess Gilead.

And the captives of **this host** among the Children of Israel,

They shall possess the Canaanites even unto **Zarephath**;

And the captives of Jerusalem, which are in **Sepharad**—

They shall possess the cities of the Negeb.

Then shall deliverers come up on Mount Zion, to judge the Mount of Esau;

And unto Jehovah shall the kingdom belong.

(Obadiah i. 1-21.)

CHAPTER XV.

The Prophet Joel (520-480 B.C.).

A Call to National Repentance addressed to Jerusalem.

The Word of the Lord that came to Joel, the son of Pethuel.

The Description of a Locust Plague, and its Lessons.

Hear this, ye old men! O give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land!

Hath this been in your days, or even in the days of your fathers?
Tell ye your children of it—your sons to their sons—their sons to another generation.

That which the **palmerworm** hath left, hath the locust eaten!
That which the locust hath left, hath the cankerworm eaten!
That which the cankerworm hath left, hath the caterpillar eaten!

Awake, ye drunkards, and weep! Howl, all ye drinkers of wine!
Alas! for the new wine; it is cut off from your mouth!
For a nation is come up against my land—strong, and without number!

Their teeth are the teeth of a lion! Their cheek-teeth are those of a lioness!
They have laid waste my vine, and barked my fig-tree!
They have stript it, and cast it away! Its branches are made white!

Lament like a bride girded with sackcloth—for the husband of her youth!
The meal-offering, and the drink-offering—they're cut off from the House of the Lord!
The priests—the ministers of the Lord—they are mourning!

The field—'tis wasted! The land—it mourneth!
For the corn is wasted; the new wine is dried up; the oil languisheth!
Be ashamed, ye husbandmen! Howl, ye vine-dressers! Alas! For the wheat and the barley!
For the harvest of the field is perished!

The vine is dried up! Yea, the fig-tree languisheth!
The pomegranate, the palm also, the apple-tree, yea, all the trees of the field—
They are withered! Joy is withered away from the sons of men!

Gird yourselves, and lament, ye priests! Howl, ye ministers of the altar!
Come, lie in sackcloth, ye ministers of my God!
The meal-offering, and the drink-offering—they're kept back from the House of your God.

Sanctify a fast! Call a solemn assembly! Gather the elders,
Yea, all that dwell in the land—to the House of the Lord your God!
And cry unto the Lord.

Alas! for the day! For the day of the Lord is at hand!
As destruction from the **Destroyer**—it cometh!
Is not the meal cut off—from before our eyes?
Are not joy and gladness gone—from the House of our God?
Is not the seed rotten under the clods? Are not the garners desolate?
The barns—are they not broken down? For the corn is withered!

How the beasts do groan! How the herds are in perplexity!
They have no pasture; yea, how desolate are the flocks!
O Lord! To Thee, I cry! The fire hath devoured the pastures

Of the land! The flame hath burned all the trees of the field!
Yea, the beasts of the field cry to Thee! The rivers of water are dried up!
The fire hath devoured the pastures of the land!

Blow the trumpet in Zion! Sound an alarm in My Holy Mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble!
The day of the Lord cometh—it is nigh at hand!

A day of darkness and gloom! A day of clouds and thick darkness!
Like the dawn, when it has burst forth upon the hills!
A people, great and strong! There has been nothing like them!
Neither shall there be—even in future generations.

A fire devoureth before them! Behind them a flame burneth!
The land is as the Garden of Eden before them! Behind them a desolated wilderness!
Yea, not a thing escapes their ravages.

(Ch. i. 1-ii.¡1-3.)

A Description of the Locusts.

Their appearance is as the appearance of horses: as horsemen, so they run!
Like the noise of chariots on the top of mountains, do they leap!
Like the noise of a flame of fire devouring stubble—as a strong force in battle array.
Before them the peoples are much pained: every face is darkened!

They run like mighty men; they climb the wall, like men of war!

They march every one in his own way—they do not confuse their ranks!

They do not push one another—they go each in his own path!

They fall upon the sword, yet they do not suffer!

They run about in the city! They run upon the wall!

They climb up upon the houses! They enter in at the windows, thief-like:

The earth quakes before them! The heavens tremble!

The sun and moon are darkened! The stars cease to shine!

The Lord utters His Voice—before His army; His camp is very great.

Great is that, which executeth His Word!

Great is the Day of the Lord—yea, very terrible! Who can stand it? (Ch. ii. 4-12.)

An Exhortation to Repentance.

O then, saith the Lord, turn ye even to Me, with all your heart;

With fasting, and with weeping, and with smiting of the breast!

O rend your heart, and not your garments! O turn unto the Lord your God,

For He is gracious and merciful—slow to anger!

He is of great kindness, and repenteth Him of purposed evil!

Who knoweth? He will turn back and repent, and leave a blessing behind Him!

Enough for a meal-offering, and a drink-offering unto the Lord, your God.

Blow the trumpet in Zion! Sanctify a fast! Call a solemn assembly!
Gather the people; sanctify the congregation; assemble the old men!
Gather the children, even those that suck the breasts!
Let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber, the bride out of her closet!
Let the priests, the Lord's ministers, weep between the porch and the altar.
Yea, let them say: "Spare Thy people, O Lord!
Give not Thine heritage to reproach, that the nations should mock them!
Why should they say among the peoples, 'Where is their God?'" (Ch. ii. 13-17.)

A Promise of Forgiveness—actually received.

Then was the Lord jealous for His land! He had pity on His people!
Yea, the Lord answered, and said unto His people, "Behold!
I am sending you corn, and wine, and oil; yea, ye shall have plenty!
And no more will I make you a reproach among the peoples!
For I am removing far from you this **northern** plague!
I am driving it into a land barren, and desolate!
With its face towards the east—its back towards the west,
Its smell shall come up—its ill smell shall come up, for it hath done great harm."

An Exhortation to Joy and Confidence.

Fear not, O land! Be glad and rejoice! For the Lord doeth great things!

Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field! For the pastures of the ground do spring!
The tree beareth her fruit! The fig tree, and the vine do yield their strength!
Be glad then, ye Children of Zion! Rejoice in the Lord, your God!
He hath given to you the rain, in righteousness,
He hath rained upon you, the former rain and the latter rain, as at first!
The floors shall be full of wheat! The vats shall overflow with wine and oil.
I will restore to you the year's produce eaten by the locust—the cankerworm—
The caterpillar—the palmerworm—My great army, which I sent among you.
Ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied! Ye shall praise the Name of the Lord, your God,
For He hath dealt wondrously with you! My people shall never be ashamed!
And ye shall know, that I am in the midst of Israel!
Even I the Lord your God, and none else! Yea, My people shall never be ashamed! (Ch. ii. 18-27.)

Promise of a Time of Great Blessing.

And it shall come to pass afterward—I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh.
And your sons, and your daughters shall prophesy;
Your old men shall dream dreams—your young men shall see visions.
Yea, also upon the slaves, and the handmaids—in those days, will I pour out My Spirit!
And I will show wonders in the heavens, and in the earth.

Blood and fire, and pillars of smoke.
The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,
Before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.
And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord shall be delivered.
For in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem shall there be delivered ones, as the Lord hath said.
Yea, among those who escape, shall be those whom the Lord shall call!
For, behold! in those days, and in that time
When I shall bring again the captivity of Judah, and Jerusalem.
I will also gather all nations, and bring them down to the valley of **Jehoshaphat.**
I will plead with them there for My people, and for My heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations, and My land —they have parted it!
Yea, they have cast lots for My people. They have given a boy for an harlot!
They have sold a girl for wine, that they might drink.
(Ch. ii. 28—iii. 1-3.)

An Appeal to Tyre and Zidon.

And what have ye to do with Me, O Tyre and Zidon, and all ye bounds of Philistia? Will ye render Me a recompence? And if ye recompense Me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own land; because ye have taken My silver, and My gold, and have carried into your temples My goodly pleasant things. The Children also of Judah, and the Children of Jerusalem have ye sold unto

the Children of **Javan**, that ye might remove them far from their border. Behold! I will raise them out of the place, whither ye have sold them, and will return your recompence upon your own head; and I will sell your sons, and your daughters into the hand of the Children of Judah; and they shall sell them to the **Sabæans**, to a people far off, for the Lord hath spoken it. (Ch. iii. 4-8.)

A Great Vindication of Jehovah's Name Foretold.

Proclaim ye this among the nations!
Prepare war! Wake up the mighty men!
Let all the men of war draw near! Let them come up!
Beat your plowshares into swords: your pruning-hooks into spears!
Let the weak say, I am strong!
Assemble yourselves, and come, all ye nations! Gather yourselves together all around.
Thither cause Thy mighty ones to come down, O Lord.
Let the nations be awakened! Let them come up to the Valley of Jehoshaphat,
For there will I sit to judge all the nations round about.
Put ye in the sickle! The harvest is ripe! Come, tread—the press is full!
The fats overflow! Yea, their wickedness is great!
Multitudes! Multitudes! See they're in the Valley of decision!
Lo! the day of the Lord is near—in the Valley of decision!
Sun and moon shall be darkened; the stars shall cease their shining,
And the Lord shall roar from Zion! He shall utter His Voice from Jerusalem!
And the heavens and the earth shall shake!

But the Lord will be His people's Hope—the Strength of Israel's Children.

So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God, dwelling in Zion, My holy mountain. Then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no strangers pass through her any more.

A Bright Conclusion: a quotation from Prophecy.

And it shall come to pass in those days:
The Mountains shall drop down new wine—the hills shall flow with milk!
Yea, all the rivers of Judah—they shall flow with water,
And a fountain shall come forth from the House of the Lord,
Which shall water the torrent valley of **Shittim.**
Egypt shall be a desolation! Edom a desolate wilderness—
For their wrong done to the Children of Judah—for their shedding of the blood of the innocent in the land!
Then Judah shall be dwelt in for ever—Jerusalem from generation to generation!
Yea, I shall purge their blood that I have not yet purged:
For, I the Lord am He that dwelleth in Zion.

(Ch. iii. 9-21.)

DIVISION II.

THE PROPHECIES READ IN THEIR HISTORICAL SETTING.

CHAPTER I.

Historical Introduction (937-800 B.C.).

The separation of the Twelve Tribes into two distinct and rival kingdoms, on the death of Solomon, marks an important epoch in the history of the Jews. The exact date of this event, however, cannot be given. It happened within the period 950-933 B.C.: let us take it as 937 B.C. The severe rule of Solomon, and the jealousy of the two leading tribes, Ephraim and Judah, furnish sufficient explanation of this disruption. From one point of view, this was an evil and disastrous thing. The glory of David's House passed away; a people united, at least outwardly, were broken up into opposing factions; a continual and almost unceasing strife began to be waged between two tribes so closely associated, and two capitals almost within view of one another. And yet, from another point of view, an important service was rendered to the cause of a pure monotheism by this separation. The northern kingdom interposed a barrier to the influx of the idolatrous customs of Syria and Assyria into the kingdom of Judah; while a spirit of patriotism was roused in Jerusalem, in defence of the Temple of Jehovah and its sacred worship. Samaria

became very soon exposed to all the force of this heathen influence. This was the result both of geographical position and of the alienation of the people from the Temple rites, caused by the sin of Jeroboam, who made Israel to sin. Thus a light was kept burning longer in David's House, and a fuller opportunity was afforded for the ministry of a long line of prophets, with their inculcation of the essential principles of the requirement of the Divine Law. Separation between Judah and Samaria was thus necessary and beneficial.

The steady advancement of Samaria towards an open and manifold idolatry was very marked. When Jeroboam I., who had spent much of his time in Egypt, and owed his maintenance on the throne of Israel very largely to the support of Shishak, the Pharaoh of his time, introduced the worship of the two calves at Dan and Bethel, he did not mean to disavow the worship of the One living and true God. Nay, his wish was that these symbols should be regarded as symbols of Jehovah, and that the people might have sanctuaries within their reach. But there was here an absence of definite religious principle, and a want of appreciation of the essential difference between Jehovah and the gods of the heathen, with which symbols were identified. He was a Holy God, having a moral and a spiritual character; but the full recognition of all that was involved in this had to be brought out by the prophets, as time advanced. The old nature-religions dwelt more upon the physical, than on the spiritual attributes of God. Hence Jeroboam's Calves made it easier for Israel to sin; the introduction of Tyrian and Syrian rites—those more sensuous forms of idolatry—was made more natural.

And Judah was not free from danger, as the prophets

openly declared : for considerations of worldly policy often drew the kings of Israel and Judah into alliances against surrounding foes. By such means the smaller kingdom became contaminated by idolatry. Jehoshaphat and Ahab formed such an alliance ; and though this good king of Judah might himself resist evil communications, his son Jehoram, when brought into very much closer relations with Ahab's court, and with Jezebel, by his marriage with her daughter, could not easily do so. The influences of a corrupting leaven were soon at work. All that the priest Jehoiada could do to counteract these was required. Athaliah, Jehoram's widow, had to pay the penalty of her life, for endeavouring to interfere with the religious use and wont of Judah.

A very special and distinct interest gathers round the prophetic ministries of two remarkable men. These are Elijah and Elisha, men raised up in the very centre of an idolatrous kingdom, and at the very crisis of a nation's fate to endeavour, with strenuous purpose, to arrest the tendencies so obviously at work, and patronised by Ahab. They, undoubtedly, did much to save Israel from an earlier abandonment to idolatry, and a speedier overthrow by Jehovah. Their noble protest against every powerful influence on behalf of Jehovah, their inculcation of a purer and more spiritual worship, and their vigorous measures of reform required, however, to be followed up with weapons of a more carnal kind. Hence their mission compelled them to denounce the House of Omri, and to anoint Jehu to overthrow them, with Hazael to be a scourge for a people so prone to forget Jehovah.

The reforming spirit initiated by Elijah led to the crowning of Jehu, as the founder of a new dynasty. But while

executing only too cruelly the divine judgment against Omri's House, Jehu failed to carry out any genuine religious reform. Hence Elisha saw with sadness the utter inadequacy of that dynasty to effect the Divine purpose, learning slowly the lesson, ever in each age to be learnt anew, that "it is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes." This great prophet must have closed his life in much disappointment. There was abounding apostasy, and great unwillingness to remove the Calves, and to model the State again according to the righteous requirement of Jehovah. On his death-bed he had to reproach Joash for his want of a vigorous policy. Had this king only understood what was really meant by the application of such an address to Elisha, as "My father, my father, the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof," things might have turned out differently. But God was not to be Israel's defence.

The reign of Jeroboam II., the fourth of Jehu's dynasty, was one of great outward brilliancy, and signal success in military undertakings. He was content, however, to let things go on, in the matter of religion, as they had been established by his illustrious name-father, the founder of his kingdom. The claim upon the service and allegiance of Israel put forth on God's behalf by Elijah and Elisha, and pathetically expressed in the words of the sacred text—"Jehovah, *The God of Israel*"—this was a claim refused both by Jeroboam the first, and by Jeroboam the second; but this claim remained, and prophets again appeared to press for its recognition. Jonah, Amos, and Hosea are commissioned one after another to intimate to Israel God's unalterable interest in them. Then, as now, the Divine claim, uttered by Divinely-sent messengers, was addressed to men refusing obedience to the Divine Voice—to a House

of rebellion, as Ezekiel had afterwards so sadly to call Judah.

Prosperity and military glory had hardened Jeroboam's heart. His capital, now in Samaria (which had been built and fortified by Omri in succession to Tirzah, the old capital), was full of luxury. It lay at the top of beautiful valleys covered with vineyards, and became, alas! a self-indulgent, and God-forgetting city. The prophet Isaiah, when called upon to declare its approaching fall, could speak of the drunkards of Ephraim, and Amos could describe the pampered ladies of its mansions as the well-fed kine of Bashan! Samaria and its kingdom were now, however, to have only a brief period of final success. This was to end with Jeroboam's reign. His death was to be the signal for the break up and dissolution of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. The cruel vengeance executed upon the House of Ahab in the plain of Jezreel, and the inadequacy of his dynasty for any worthy end were to bring upon the House of Jehu a similar punishment. Amos had already made this clear, when he was roughly driven away from Bethel, and his voice rudely silenced. But another voice, still more peremptory and pointed, is soon heard. Hosea declared that in Jeroboam II., the fourth of Jehu's House, that dynasty should end. And so it practically came about. The years that followed his death were years of anarchy and confusion in Israel. When Jeroboam died, his sceptre was at the disposal of the strongest, and the land was in a perfect turmoil of uncertainty. It is a remarkable coincidence that about this time the great earthquake is supposed to have happened; and that this was the year that Uzziah was smitten with leprosy, for his presumptuous interference with priestly functions. Men's minds then failed them for fear.

Up to the time of this sad event, the natural result of prosperity, Uzziah, Jeroboam's contemporary on the throne of Judah, had been singularly successful. Both kings had extended their boundaries, and developed commerce. A reason can be found for this in the fact, that Syria could no longer devote so much attention to Palestine, her efforts being required to cope in self-defence with a mightier foe in Assyria. Ahab had united with Syria against Assyria, and an army from Israel fought at Karkar in 854 B.C., as the Assyrian Inscriptions tell us. It is not necessary to hold, however, that Ahab was king so late as this; if he was, his son must have been regent. Jehu, however, bought off the Assyrian opposition by paying tribute in 842 B.C. Thus, for about a century onwards, Israel and Judah were free from foreign invasion from this quarter.

The boundaries of the two kingdoms, at this time, are clearly defined; and, if they could have been reunited in a satisfactory manner, the tabernacle of David, which had fallen, might have been raised, as was the hope of Amos. From Hamath, on the Orontes in the North, at the foot of the Lebanons, down to the Brook of the Willows, dividing Moab from Edom, stretched the sceptre of Jeroboam, while Moab, and Ammon on the East of the Jordan owned his sway. Syria, with its important capital Damascus, lay along his north-eastern frontier, a barrier between him and Assyria, to fall before his kingdom could; while Judah's influence extended over Edom, down to Elath on the Gulf of Akabah. A vision of hopefulness had been before men in Israel, about the beginning of the eighth century before Christ. By the middle of that century, this vision had been blurred.

The time just before Jeroboam II. was a time of affliction for all classes of the people as the somewhat obscure Hebrew

phrase, rendered in our Bible,* "not any shut up, nor left," tells us. But in Jeroboam, Jehovah had raised up a deliverer for Israel, as the prophet Jonah declared. This prophet came forth from Gath-Hepher, near Cana of Galilee, with a promise of deliverance, as he spoke with gladness of a coming turn in the tide of fortune. When he arose, hope seemed gone; above and around were dark clouds. Jehu's House so far was a failure: Israel was on the point of being blotted out, from under heaven: the end of things seemed near. Not so, however, did the patriot prophet think. His mission was the proclamation of a near time of grace; he foretold a divine interposition, which would still further afford time and space for repentance. The prophecy of Jonah, containing all his message to Israel, is not extant, and is only briefly referred to in the history. Like his predecessors, Gad, Nathan, &c., he lived before the time when the prophets of Jehovah wrote their words of teaching and warning in a book. It is only when we come to the middle of the eighth century that we find Amos recording his prophecies, *i.e.*, about 750 B.C. No written historical or prophetic records are found in Israel of an earlier date than this. Joel is now generally regarded as a late prophet, while oral tradition, and rude inscriptions on stone must have preserved early precepts, and sacred songs. The prophetic record of Jonah's visit to Nineveh will be dealt with immediately.

Jonah must have had considerable influence in the court of Jeroboam, and been held in honour. His message was pleasing to king and people. But his love of righteousness, and earnestness of spirit, features he must have possessed in common with all the prophets worthy of the name, must soon have caused him, like Elisha, to be filled with much

* Two divisions of the whole, either under taboo, or free, *i.e.*, all.

disappointment. His words of hope about national success and triumph in war were fulfilled, but he saw no spiritual reformation accomplished. What the subsequent course of his life was, we know not. Living at a time when negotiation was not uncommon between Assyria and Israel, he is represented as having been summoned by God to Nineveh on higher errands. The home life, with its honourable post, may have powerfully drawn him, while Nineveh as a heathen state may have repelled him. To this man, in such circumstances, the Divine Voice came. Israel and Nineveh are thus brought into striking contrast, and we pass from our historical introduction to deal with the important spiritual problems before us.

CHAPTER II.

The Prophecy of Jonah in Nineveh (770 B.C.).

(Pp. 12-17.)

There are so many marked differences between the prophecy here attributed to Jonah, and those ascribed to the other prophets, that it is now generally believed that it was not written by the prophet, whose name it bears, but was the production of a very much later period. The first written prophecy, and in the purest Hebrew, is that of Amos; and, if we place Jonah's prophecy here, it is in order to give us an opportunity of dealing with Nineveh, that great Assyrian power that for about two centuries dominated the whole course of Judah's history. As we have already hinted, apart from the tradition of Jonah's ministry, the negotiations between Israel and Assyria in the time of Jehu and Jero-

boam may have been the reason for the ascription of this prophecy to Jonah.

But the differences above referred to, require to be noted. From the fact that Jonah is spoken of chiefly in the third person, it may be argued that this writing is rather a prophetic account of an historical episode, traditionally handed down, than a prophetic narrative written by the prophet himself. It has been well called the history of a prophecy. The language is also of a later period, containing, as it does, Chaldaic, and Aramaic elements, which point to the era of the Restoration, when sojourn in Babylon had largely influenced the spoken language of Palestine. While, again, the distinct purpose of the writer to teach that Nineveh might be forgiven on true repentance, is a purpose that speaks of a time when the lessons of Isaiah and Jeremiah had been well learnt. Only after the Exile were such principles, as this book contains, inculcated.

The ascription of such a book to Jonah might seem to us a pious fraud, were we not to remember that this custom of so ascribing modern writings to early names was extremely common among the Jews. It is not for us to discuss the question of the rightness or wrongness of such a course. The fact is well known: and in providence God has used human channels, and very earthen vessels, for the instruction of mankind.

The foundation facts of the narrative must be regarded as true, and they are deeply interesting. That Jonah really lived and taught, that he may have gone on a mission to Nineveh, all this we believe. But around these facts has been gathered a prophetic testimony to teach essential principles of divine revelation to a later age. About 880 B.C., Assyria was becoming a World-power, and in 821 B.C. had

made Babylon, which was in after centuries to be her great successor, tributary. Nineveh soon became a great city, or rather a cluster of cities covering a large area, with an immense population, wholly given over to idolatry. To this graphic references are made in the writing before us. In 842 B.C., Jehu, king of Israel, had paid tribute to this powerful empire, and during Jeroboam's brilliant reign Assyria never invaded Israel — work nearer home required attention. Soon, however, Syria, which had grown strong under the Benhadads and Hazael, had to be conquered; while the unwise alliance of Judah, under Ahaz, with Assyria against Syria and Israel, only brought Assyria as an important factor into the affairs of Palestine. Egypt and Assyria soon became the rival powers for ascendancy. The prophets Isaiah and Nahum declared the fall of the proud empire of Nineveh, but between Jeroboam's time (800-758 B.C.) and this fall in 609 B.C. many things happened.

The prophet Jonah, who had been disappointed in not seeing any reform of a religious kind at home, is represented as being sent far hence to the Gentiles, in the hope of getting more willing hearers. As at a later time the Apostles, rejected by the Jews, had to turn to the Gentiles (Acts xiii. 46), so now the writer would impress on his own people, that God would extend the privileges, which were being despised at home to a heathen people. The unwillingness of the Jews so to open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers is strikingly set forth in the unwillingness of Jonah to go upon such an errand as the proclamation of the Gospel to such a pronounced enemy of Israel as Nineveh had been. The slowness of the Jews to accept the lofty teachings of Isaiah and his successors about Jehovah as the God, not of one people, but of the whole earth, and the pressure

of the Divine discipline necessary to bring them to better and worthier views of Jehovah—all this we can see described in the narrative before us. The Voice of God was calling Israel forwards to a nobler destiny, as it called Jonah. In both cases, that Voice was for a time refused, and thus the fulfilment of the Divine purpose was delayed. Those who, either as nations or as individuals, flee from divinely-inspired duty, and the calls of conscience to a higher service and a wider sphere, in the vain hope of getting away from the Presence of God, soon find that the Divine Hand is on them in every place. They are forced, sooner or later, to say, "Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid Thine Hand upon me. Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy Presence? If I ascend up into Heaven, Thou art there! If I make my bed in Sheol, behold Thou art there!" (Ps. cxxxix. 5-12). So Jonah found; so Scripture always teaches. God's purpose must be fulfilled. His will must be done. The Divine Voice which says, "Go," must sooner or later be obeyed.

Israel was like Jonah—nay, worse. For Israel refused to accept God's comprehensive salvation-purpose as for all nations. Their exclusiveness became their ruin. Christ had to come, before the middle wall of partition was finally broken down (Eph. ii. 14). Yet had not Rahab been saved, and Naaman the Syrian cleansed? Had not there been indications all along of a world-wide Gospel?

Jonah's disobedience was followed by a stormy voyage, a strange deliverance from drowning, and a preservation that made him at once hasten on his commission. He, who rules the sea and the dry land makes all things obedient to His purpose. And this is the lesson that this Scripture, as all other Scripture, is fitted so well to teach. It was given

not to instruct in history or geography or natural science, but in the moral government of the universe by God. It tells not how things are done, it emphasises the principle that God does them. Its first and last word to men is—God over all. Prophets had this one lesson to teach the world, and then, as now, the world is a slow learner.

What exactly the writer meant to teach by the deliverance of Jonah, we need not specially trouble ourselves with. His manifest idea is, that God punished Israel for not doing His work, and delivered them again from the Captivity, to give them a new opportunity for being His servants.

The psalm containing Jonah's prayer is an interesting specimen of psalmodic literature, abounding, as it does, in expressions found in many other psalms. It is put into the first person, and might well have found its place in the Book of Psalms. The recognition of God as supreme, and a grateful acknowledgment of His mercies, are fully expressed in its touching verses. We are reminded by it of Hezekiah's psalm given in Isaiah, and of the 116th.

Such an earnest proclamation of the Gospel, as would be delivered by a man like Jonah, must always produce its own results. Jonah's personal character, his striking mission, and his testimony about God's dealing with himself, would be a sign to an unbelieving people. And this is the point of Christ's argument in the references to this book—a book well known to the Jews (Matt. xii. 40, xvi. 4; Luke xi. 29). He discounted the influence that a man risen from the dead would have on those who rejected the spiritual teaching of Moses and the prophets (Luke xvi. 31). He complained of the tendency, not yet exorcised from the Church, "to look for signs and wonders" (John iv. 48). In His quotation from books known to everybody, Christ

did not say anything about their authorship, or give thereby any confirmation of anything contained in them. He used them as they lay before Him, and as they were used by everybody else, for His own definite moral and spiritual teaching. We therefore must not draw more from these quotations than what Christ meant to enforce. Divine signs are more in the region of the spiritually miraculous, than in that of the physical. Jonah, the disobedient and reluctant, made the obedient and willing prophet—this was miracle indeed. Christ, rejected and cast out by men, by being raised up by God would be a sign to all. But how imperfect was Jonah's attitude! For God's purposes are always grander than our human conceptions of them. Perhaps, men may urge themselves to do a kindly turn to their enemies, because it is right, while yet they may not do so willingly, or with any desire that their kindness should do good, or be accepted. Personal elements, local prejudices, national bias—these warp men's judgments still. The demand, that God makes upon us, is that we should do His will with our whole heart, whatever may be the consequences. This lesson was read to Israel by this narrative, as they were made to feel what a sorry figure Jonah cut, and how poor and meagre their views were, when placed alongside those of God.

How grand is the philanthropy of God! (Titus iii. 4). How much higher than man's highest conception of it! Yet it is foreshadowed, and in measure represented, in human sympathy: Jonah's sympathy for the gourd's sudden destruction was a type—poor, but true—of the Divine. "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter iii. 9). Mercy rejoiceth over justice. Have we learnt even yet all that such

a narrative is so well—so divinely fitted, to teach? Do *we* understand that God waits for the repentance of every heart? No Nineveh falls, save by its own God-defying sin.

CHAPTER III.

The Prophecy of Amos (780-740 B.C.).

(Pp. 17-34.)

Under a distinct call, obeyed at once, Amos of Tekoa, who had spent his days in agricultural operations, went from the kingdom of Judah to the very centre of the Northern Kingdom. Nurtured in a region associated with the best traditions of a united people—living near to Bethlehem, whence had sprung the great founder of a wide and extensive dominion, and in full view of Berachah, with its memories of Jehoshaphat's striking victory over a combined host of Judah's enemies, he had the best of opportunities for preparation for the Divine service. In this case, God chose one for His work, who had had no training in the schools of the prophets, no special training save that of pure thoughts and the consecration of a life, which, after all, is the essential prerequisite of all service. He was a man of comfortable, if not independent means: probably what we would now call a small peasant-proprietor, farming his own land, watching his own fruit-trees, and taking oversight of his own sheep. He did not enter on the prophetic office, as the unworthy sneer of Amaziah, the false priest of Bethel, would imply, for a means of support; but having heard a Divine call, irresistible like a lion's roar, indicative of approaching danger to God's people, he under-

took a high and responsible mission to an idolatrous people, who might yet be warned in time to give up their sin and return to God, and to allegiance to David's House. Amos saw before him a distinct work; he recognised that Israel's continuance in their present ways would bring down Divine vengeance, and he responded to the call, in the conviction that Jehovah would do nothing without revealing it to His servants. "The Lord hath spoken," he says, "who can but prophesy?" The call of duty is at once accepted, and joyfully obeyed by Amos. Not his were all the painful experiences attributed to the disobedient prophet, who was his immediate predecessor, and perhaps in part contemporary.

Although belonging to Judah, his mission wholly concerned Israel. The centre of prophetic activity was always the point of danger; where the greatest cause of anxiety lay, there must God's voice be heard the loudest. Later on, the prophetic activity centres round Jerusalem; but now in Israel's last half century, this opportunity must be fully utilized to counteract by outstanding prophetic agency the evil and destructive tendencies, so manifest in Samaria. The time of Amos' appearance is definitely fixed as being two years before the earthquake, which we date as 758 B.C., that disastrous year for King Uzziah, with so many circumstances, that would keep it well in sad remembrance. Jeroboam was reigning, but his end was near. The hopes of a spiritual reformation to be accomplished by him had been, as we have seen, disappointed; his success simply concerned earthly aggrandisement. Amos has told us nothing about his subsequent history. After his rude repulse at the altar of Bethel, he probably returned to his pleasant country avocations in Tekoa.

The burden of his message was pardon in the event of

repentance, but destruction in the event of refusal to abandon idolatry. Perhaps Amos lived to see his words only too sadly fulfilled in his old age, as Israel was carried into captivity (722 B.C.). Passing now from the man, we think more in detail of his prophetic message. The message is compared to the utterance of a lion, proceeding from the Temple on Zion, and David's Royal City; for the Divine Voice is one of power, and terror to those who disregard God. The prophet is convinced that God is about to execute judgment on Israel. Through him God gives His warning to the Northern Kingdom.

The prophecy opens with eight solemn words addressed to the following peoples: Syria, Philistia, Tyre, Edom, Ammon, Moab, Judah, and Israel. The comprehensive survey of the prophet is clear; he has a word to all his neighbours. His point of view is somewhat like that of his great successor Isaiah; for, though he does not say anything here about the mighty Empire of Assyria, he clearly knows very much, and implies much. God always speaks opportunely to His servants the prophets.

These eight oracles open with the same striking phrase which tells us that, notwithstanding many previous punishments for wrong-doing, the peoples addressed still continued transgressing, and still required further punishment. It is sad that men should disregard the punishments and warnings of Providence: but as they do now, so they did then. Hence God's hand was still stretched out. The kingdom of Syria or Aram had been brought into close connection with Israel from time to time. The commission of the prophet Elijah, which authorised him to anoint Hazael as king of the country, is specially remarkable; for here a prophet of Jehovah is sent on an errand beyond the boundaries

of the Jewish kingdom, though the purpose of his mission deeply concerns Israel. War had gone on for many years between Benhadad, king of Syria, and Ahab: and while on the field of Ramoth-Gilead (about 854 B.C.) Ahab had lost his life in battle with the Syrians, the united forces of Judah and Israel had been successful. During these terrible border wars, Syria had indeed literally and figuratively threshed Gilead with threshing instruments of iron. Barbarous were the customs of warfare at that time, and Judah under David had been guilty of similarly great cruelties to the Ammonites (2 Sam. xii. 31).

When Elisha was prophet in Israel, we read of another great Syrian invasion, when the Syrians had fled in disaster; for the prophet had stood forth in God's high Name as Israel's defence. Shortly after this, during the sickness of Benhadad, Hazael availed himself of this opportunity to slay his master, and seize the crown, as Elisha had said. But the prophet was deeply grieved that he had been called to designate such a man, for he saw in him one who would fulfil Elijah's terrible words, and be guilty of great cruelty to Israel (1 Kings xix. 17). And truly Hazael became the instrument of the Divine wrath to chastise Israel, in the closing days of Jehu. His successes led to a large contraction of her boundaries, and caused much suffering (2 Kings x. 33). But the dynasty of Hazael was to be short-lived; and Amos the prophet now proclaimed that the king would be cut off, and the people carried away into captivity by that Assyrian power, which was now looming in the near distance. Damascus and her palaces fell under Tiglath Pileser, the Assyrian, in 732 B.C.

The prophet turns round next, and delivers his message to the Philistines. They had always been the most trouble-

some thorn in the side of Judah and Israel. Gladly they united with their enemies to harass the Jews. Joining with Edom on the East, they carried many Israelites, even when at peace with them (as we understand the text), into captivity, and sold them to the Tyrians and Arabians. But, while God would allow this people thus to chastise Israel, the prophet declared that a day would soon come when all the chief towns of Philistia would be humbled. They soon suffered much from the military operations of Assyria, Egypt, and Babylon.

He then speaks to Tyre. Under its king, Hiram, it had entered into an alliance with David, and had furnished cedar for the building of Solomon's temple. But this brotherly alliance had ended, and Tyre had co-operated with Edom, Israel's cruelest enemy. For this change of policy, and its cruel accompaniments, Amos foretold a speedy retribution. The prophets always saw in Edom a spirit of unrelenting hatred towards Israel. The wrong done by Jacob to his brother, Esau, had given rise to a bitter blood-feud and an unending conflict. Edom, Esau's posterity, always cherished the most bitter feelings against the Tribes, who were descended from Jacob; and though this was natural enough, it is contrary to the Divine Plan of life, which has always room for forgiveness. Inasmuch as Edom showed no pity, and would not hear of forgiveness, a similar measure of unforgiving severity was meted out to her, when the palaces of her capital were destroyed.

Ammon and Moab were generally united in their frequent inroads upon Palestine. They were cruel and bloodthirsty enemies. Moab's boastfulness and arrogance are referred to in Isaiah (ch. xvi., xxiv.). Their opposition to God's people

was bound to bring ruin upon them; this the prophet foresees, and declares.

In the two last oracles, Amos speaks to the Tribes themselves. He complains that Jehovah and His law were disregarded in Judah—the people going after lying vanities. But the immoralities of Israel are more detailed. The poor were there oppressed; money was the one object of ambition; the very dust upon the head of the poor was coveted by those, whose land-grabbing knew no limits. Incest, profanity, and sacrilege prevailed, and at the very altars of religion drunken debaucheries went on. For all these things a day of reckoning was coming. But the prophet now approaches the special object of his mission, and addresses earnest and faithful words to the Ten Tribes alone. Their ingratitude towards God, for His many mercies towards them, is dwelt upon. He had been their helper, yet they had not acknowledged Him. When He should withdraw His help, how helpless indeed would they be! No exemption from the punishment due to evil is secured to those, who are favoured by God; nay, their sins shall be even more rigorously dealt with than those of others with less knowledge of the Divine requirement. And the sins of Israel were manifest: the Lord consequently, by this special prophet, declared His intention to punish them. Violence and robbery, ease and luxury, idolatry and indulgence, so prevalent in a time of worldly prosperity, would lead to certain ruin. The wealthy ladies of Samaria, who oppressed the poor, and lorded it over their paramours, would yet have bitter days in store for themselves, as they would flee in vain for refuge, or cry in vain for help to the false goddess, they now worshipped. There was no lack of sacrifices; there were altars and shrines, with abundant ostentation. But the worshippers pleased them-

selves, rather than God, in all this; God's moral law was at a discount, and forbidden leaven was used in the sacrificial feasts. On such a people many warning judgments had already come—in famine, drought, blighted crops, pestilence, and invasion: but all to no purpose, hence, five times over, comes in the mournful refrain: "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord." The Divine purpose to wean Israel from idolatry by such means had not been perceived. God, as the Almighty, had not been honoured. But Israel must prepare to meet this God, who is the Creator of all things, and the disposer of all events—this God who has specially revealed Himself as Jehovah, the God of Hosts.

The prophet has, however, no great confidence as to Israel's future; hence he bursts out into lamentation over the fall of this people. Instead of seeking unto God, they had multiplied rites and pilgrimages at the holy places, at Dan, Bethel, Beersheba, and Gilgal. That which might have been a house of God (Bethel) had become a house of iniquity (Bethaven); that which might have held God, would go into captivity. The prophet sets forth the glorious attributes of God, so worthy of honour in His supremacy, not only over all the powers of nature, but also over all the kingdoms and purposes of men. On every side he sees only abounding sin—an open defiance of God, in whose favour alone could life be found. The prophet cannot but think of Jehovah as having a moral purpose. And yet there were some among them, that professed to have God on their side. They imagined God to have a special and sole interest in them, and they wished, so they said, for the Day of the Lord, while all the time immorality of life prevailed, and only the outward forms of godliness were seen. Practical goodness was wanting. Were the day of the Lord to come,

they assuredly would not be happy! And here the prophet refers to the simple obedience of a loving people in the wilderness, when ceremonies were few, and the religious spirit active. Then Jehovah alone was worshipped, and there was no God beside Him; but now Siccuth and Chiun, Syrian deities, are held in reverence.

The mention of the Wilderness devotion recalls the days of the Egyptian bondage, when the affliction of Joseph caused no grief to those in high places. Again are God's true people suffering affliction, but at the hands of their own rulers, who, puffed up in their own conceits, saw merit in themselves, and failed to remember that, being no better than others, they owed all to Divine grace. To such self-indulgent careless rulers, a terrible overthrow was approaching; for an unnamed nation is to be raised up against Israel, and the whole land from North to South is to be devastated. But as the prophet sees the coming destruction, he is alarmed at its sweeping character; he fears that Israel may be entirely destroyed. It appears as if locusts were devouring everything before them, or as if an all-devouring fire passed through the land. The prophet prays that such terrible destruction may not come, and his prayer is answered. But the sins of Jeroboam's House cannot remain unpunished; for the prophet sees the divine plumb-line being let down, and he is convinced that God, who is righteous, must execute judgment on unrighteousness.

At this point the prophet is rudely interrupted by a sycophant priest. The sins of the Royal House must not be condemned by the stranger prophet. This hireling priest, whose profits and emoluments were bound up with these sins, saw a condemnation of himself in the condemnation of them. Self-interests were attacked, and false priest and

idolatrous king conspire to silence God's messenger. The contrast between Amos and Amaziah is very much in favour of the former. He did not prophesy for bread, and he was perfectly free to denounce every abuse; while Amaziah was a highly-paid ecclesiastic, at the bidding of the civil power. Amos calmly vindicates his position, and then, in awful words, foretells the fate of the man who would interdict prophecy, and buttress up a God-denying and a Law-dishonouring idolatry. Nothing can stay when God arises to judgment. King, Priest, People—all that resist God shall perish.

The closing portion of this prophecy contains two visions, both of which speak of ruin and disaster—the end of harvest, and the overthrow of a temple of religion. Terrible days the prophet sees coming fast, when the help of idolatry shall be futile: the god of Dan, and the rites of Beersheba shall help in vain. Such a forecast affords fitting occasion to make one last grand appeal to Israel, as God's chosen people, to stay themselves upon Him, and to assure them that only those sinners who are finally impenitent shall be cut off.

Through the clouds of the dark day of chastisement, the prophet looks; and he sees and foretells the dawn of a better time, when, in a day of reconciliation and restoration, the fallen House of David may be raised again. The scattering of Israel in captivity will be a time of sifting, in which the true wheat shall be preserved. Providential dispensations will be wisely ordered for bringing about highest blessing. The wars between Judah and Israel would then cease: the dominion of David's House would extend not only over Edom, but also over those neighbouring tribes which had once already, in the days of the nation's glory, been called by Jehovah's name. These would be the days of

great rejoicing: in harmony with man's gladness would the mountains drop sweet wine, and all the hills would melt. Then would the evil consequences of sin and idolatry be removed. For such a time Amos prayed: such a time he, in common with all the prophets, anticipated, a time of spiritual and material prosperity for a penitent and godly people.

CHAPTER IV.

The Last Days of Israel (758-722 B.C.).

(Pp. 35-40.)

The historical books here give us very little information about the troublesome days through which Israel as a kingdom passed on the death of Jeroboam, and before its overthrow. There are thirty-six years here to be filled up; and while there are no less than six kings, if not seven, named as claiming royal honours during this time, two chapters only in the Book of Kings help us. But the prophecy of Hosea, which we shall have next to consider, sheds a flood of light on the period, and clearly indicates the unsettled and anarchical condition of things that then prevailed. The death of Jeroboam was the cessation of a strong military power, which had maintained order by force. Now the bow of Israel was broken, and national salvation was no more to be looked for by bow or sword or battle, by horses or by horsemen. This the prophet clearly teaches; and this the history abundantly confirms. The period of 758 to 749 B.C. is a battle ground of controversy. Some think Jeroboam continued king till 749 B.C., others find an interregnum here before Zechariah became king. The son of a great king, who had made Syria feel his power, and

made his boundary reach to Hamath, as in the best days of Judah,—this son is so weak that he cannot hold his own throne. In him the vengeance foretold against the House of Jehu finds its fulfilment; and not without adequate reason. For Zechariah seemed to go in the evil ways of his ancestors, keeping up all the idolatrous traditions of Jeroboam's court. The warnings of Amos and Hosea were all in vain. What followed the death of Zechariah is, however, by no means clear. Shallum led a conspiracy, and smote him in Ibleam, a town in the plain of Jezreel: thus the Greek of the LXX. has it. But another reading finds in this word, translated in our version, "before the people," the name of another claimant to royal honours. Here, however, there can be no certainty; and it is sufficient for our purpose to mark two things. (1) That Jehu's House had four representatives only on the throne, as declared by prophecy—holding power from about 866 to 758 B.C., both Jehu and Jeroboam having long reigns. (2) That 758 B.C. marks the beginning of the Decline and Fall of Israel. Glancing for a moment at the history of Judah, in order if possible to understand the cross references, we find it stated that the death of Jeroboam occurred in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah, king of Judah, which would begin about 796 or 794 B.C., and thus 758 B.C. or thereabouts would be the death-year of Jeroboam II. It was a very common custom for Eastern kings to assume their eldest sons, when they came to a certain age, as co-regents. The father's growing incapacity for rule, or the increasing popularity of the son, led to this in many cases. Thus Uzziah had been made joint-sovereign with his father, by a popular movement. It is not easy to determine always whether these joint regencies are included or not in the years assigned to various kings. The fifty-two years of

Uzziah's reign would run from, say 795 to 742 B.C., when Isaiah received his prophetic call. A similar period occurs from 810 to 758 B.C.: so that Uzziah may have commenced his regency in the former year, and Jotham, his son, been recognised as regent in the latter year, when leprosy laid the king aside. The principles adopted in the reckoning of the reigns of the kings seem to have been largely indefinite, and not scientific. That is to say, we have popular writing. Part of a year would be sometimes counted one year; at another time it might be wholly omitted. This would happen according to the time of the year when the king began to reign. At any rate, the biblical data here are not wholly to be set aside; accuracy to within two or three years, may surely satisfy us as to the general correctness of the calculations. Thus Jeroboam II., dying in the thirty-eighth year of Uzziah, it follows that the thirty-ninth year of Uzziah, as the record tells us, the death-year of Zechariah, after his brief reign of six months, was 757 B.C., when Shallum, another conspirator, seized the throne, and reigned, however, only for the short space of one month. For in that year, Menahem brought upon him a speedy vengeance, making himself king. Thus in a remarkably short time three kings in Israel—three shepherds, as they are designated—were cut off, even Jeroboam, Zechariah, and Shallum (see p. 67, Zechariah xi. 8). Certainly God was angry with His people, and the withdrawal of His grace is clearly seen in such a time of anarchy. These kings were not the Lord's anointed. They were made not by God, but by factions; appointed not by the *vox Dei*, expressed in normal conditions by the *vox populi*, when people and prophet agree, but by rival parties. Israel was now torn asunder by opposing policies.

Menahem was a cruel ruler. As he opened his reign, so he continued. Being unpopular, and opposed by a faction that favoured an Egyptian, rather than an Assyrian alliance, it may be supposed that Pekah, a powerful military chieftain, held his own for some time before Menahem's death, as an independent ruler. When Tiglath Pileser invaded Israel, Menahem paid tribute to him, that so he might have the kingdom confirmed in his hand. The date of this is fixed as 738 B.C., according to the Assyrian Inscriptions. Thus from 758 to 738 B.C. Menahem was king, at least in name, over Israel. By this time, however, Pekah was counting his years as king, and by his followers he may have been recognised as such. Nominally he was a captain or chief officer of Menahem, but, having high authority, he was virtually independent. So long as he was not interfered with, Pekah may have left his master to enjoy his empty honour; but the moment that he and Pekahiah, his son, endeavoured to restrain him, in dependence on help from Assyria, Pekah rose and slew Pekahiah. What a sad picture does this present of rival factions and internecine strife! Pekah's power lay in Gilead, on the east of the Jordan, and sufficiently far away from Samaria to defy his lawful king, like other lawless chieftains, known in history. Pekahiah's reign was brief, only about two years, but he must have been regent with his father, for we are told that he came to the throne in the fiftieth year of Uzziah, *i.e.*, about 746 B.C., after his father had reigned ten years alone. The two years of Pekahiah's sole reign would be 738-737 B.C., from which latter date Pekah's full power would count. As sole king he reigned about ten years, till 728 B.C., when another usurper seized the throne in the person of Hoshea, Israel's last king. How true is it that they who take the sword perish

with it! Pekah is said to have reigned in all twenty years—a period which must be calculated back from 728 B.C. to 747 B.C. or thereabouts, about the fifty-second year of Uzziah, when Menahem's supremacy was called in question by this independent lieutenant of the Trans-Jordanic region. A second invasion of Israel was made by Tiglath Pileser in the days of Pekah, about the year 736 B.C.; and this, of course, must have been occasioned by the death of Menahem's son, and the refusal of Pekah to continue the tribute promised by Menahem. This invasion was disastrous to the Ten Tribes. It led to great loss of territory, and to the carrying away of a large part of their population into Assyria. The Assyrian method of securing the loyalty of a conquered nation was the removal of the old population, and the transportation of other tribes to the emptied towns. This had been already done to the towns north of Israel. The avenging sword of the Assyrian fell with special severity on those parts, which had supported Pekah, and enabled him to overthrow Menahem. The picture of Isaiah (ix. 1) comes up before our eye, as we think of the gloom and trouble caused by the heavy affliction to Zebulun, Naphtali, the way beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, in this terrible invasion of Tiglath Pileser.

Hoshea became king in 728 B.C., we have said. This is reckoned the twentieth year of Jotham (2 Kings xv. 30). To understand this, Jotham's reign of sixteen years must be supposed to have begun in 749 B.C., when Uzziah was still living, and Jotham was only regent. It must be noted that, though Jotham held power for fully twenty years (758-736 B.C.), he was not king so long (2 Kings xv. 5). But it is impossible to fix the date from which the full power of Jotham is to be reckoned. While the death-year of Uzziah

is 742 B.C., something of importance may have taken place in 749 B.C. The sixteen years of Jotham's reign may be reckoned from 750-736 B.C. This would allow the twentieth year after Jotham's accession to be the year when Hoshea became king, *i.e.*, 728 B.C.

This accession of Hoshea is also synchronised with the twelfth year of Ahaz, Jotham's successor (2 Kings xvii. 1); and an explanation of this can be found in the supposition that Ahaz was regent with his father for three or four years, just as Hezekiah was regent with Ahaz for a few years at the end of that king's reign. The regency of Ahaz would thus date from about 739 B.C., or about twelve years before Hoshea became king in Israel. These calculations are not of much importance, but they are interesting if they can in any way throw light upon the cross references of the historical books. Of more interest and sadder importance is the social and spiritual condition of Israel. That manifestly was a God-forsaking and a God-forsaken one.

Hoshea did evil, but in what particular way we are not told. It was different from his predecessors—this alone we know. His policy was uncertain. Owing his throne to Egyptian intrigue, he very soon succumbed to the stronger arm of a power that lost no time in securing its position in the land. Shalmaneser IV., now the successor of Tiglath Pileser (727 B.C.), promptly invaded Israel, and insisted on the payment of the tribute promised ten years before, by Menahem. But Hoshea was only constrained by force to do this, and soon brought down the full might of Assyria upon his tottering kingdom. He endeavoured to enlist Egypt in the defence of his country against Assyria. In this, doubtless, Hoshea showed his perception of the necessary coming conflict between these two world-powers;

and if Egypt had acted promptly in alliance with Israel and Judah, the tide of Assyrian invasion might have been driven back, at least for a time. Shalmaneser, however, acted with more promptitude. He at once seized Hoshea, and threw him into prison. In 724 B.C., or Hoshea's sixth year, Samaria was besieged, and in 722 B.C. it fell. That year saw the candlestick, so long abused, so long also unused, removed out of its place. What had been already done in the case of Gilead and the northern provinces is now done in Samaria itself. The Israelites are carried away in a body to the regions ruled over by Assyria. Their place was at once occupied by people, who afterwards played their part in the subsequent history as Samaritans, with whom the Jews "had no dealing." These were also called Kuthim, a large number of them, probably, coming from Kutha, a city of Babylonia.

The reason of this judgment is clearly declared to be the forsaking of Jehovah, and the walking of Israel in the statutes of the heathen. This opportunity is taken by the prophetic writer of this portion of the book of Kings, to give a full and detailed statement of Israel's apostasy, and its sad consequences. At the same time, we are reminded that prophets and seers had been sent to warn them of the evil, that would come upon them, if they thus continued. Among these prophets were the prominent names of Jonah, Amos, and Hosea, some part of whose prophecies is extant; but there would be also others equally useful, if anonymous to us. Hosea, using a striking figure, speaks of God hewing Israel by the prophets, and slaying them by the words of His mouth (vi. 5). And it should be remembered, that there would be a continual succession of prophets in Israel and Judah—their function being to declare the mind and will of God, who

never leaves Himself without witness at any time. The point of chief interest was at this time the kingdom of the Ten Tribes; hence it is that we have on record so fully God's gracious dealings with them. From Elijah to Hosea we trace the striving of the Divine Spirit, as from Ahab to Hoshea we see the increasing refusal of obedience on the human side, leading to its inevitable results. This line of prophets was engaged in the vindication of Jehovah's Name and glory, where these were specially assailed. Two prophets are mentioned as appearing in Judah at a time of special danger, even when Jehoshaphat was exposed to the combined attack of Moabites, Ammonites, and others, and to the evil consequences of his alliance with Ahab. It was at such a time that Jahaziel and Eliezer delivered their messages. These prophetic announcements are, however, contained in the writings of the sacred Chronicler, perhaps on account of their brevity. But in this we have evidence of the fact that not only in Israel, but also in Judah, Jehovah had His prophetic ambassadors ready at His command to do His work in guiding affairs, and in making known His Will. Another such prophet was Oded, but of him we shall speak after our next chapter, as his message is more fully given.

The mixed worship, that soon prevailed in Samaria, is briefly described in the passage that follows. The peoples from the various Assyrian and Babylonian towns, now introduced into the towns of Ephraim first by Sargon and later on by Esarhaddon, brought with them their own heathen deities. But with the superstitious idea, common still among Eastern nations, that each tribe or country has its own local deity, they attributed the troubles that they experienced to their ignorance of the manner of the God of

the land. They believed that religion was a cult or ritual: a system, not of doctrine, or moral practice, but of ritual observances. Instead of abandoning their old worships, they simply added to these the worship of Jehovah, thereby misunderstanding Jehovah's claim to sole supremacy. This eclectic spirit is not yet a thing of the past. In the human Pantheon, room is made for many gods, but no room for one God. Thus the Samaritans feared Jehovah, and served their own gods after the manner of the nations, who had carried away the people of Israel. Samaria was now forsaken of king and prophet, of people and God; and the new "people of the land," formed of the strangers and those who remained, were soon thorns in the sides of the restored people of God.

CHAPTER V.

The Prophecy of Hosea (770-725 B.C.).

(Pp. 40-59.)

The name of this prophet, which is a shortened form of Jehoshuah, is the same as that of Israel's last king, though the words vary slightly. It means Jehovah is Salvation, and is also found as the name of the great successor of Moses, Joshua. Hosea, the prophet, was in part the contemporary of Amos, and, as Israel's last prophet, continued his ministry to within a few years of Samaria's fall in 722 B.C. The editorial heading of the prophecy, which indicates that he prophesied in Hezekiah's reign, may be explained by the circumstance that the king was regent along with his father, Ahaz, from 728 to 722 B.C. The various utterances

of Hosea date from the fall of Jeroboam's House, about 758 B.C., almost up to the final siege of Samaria in 724 B.C.

Nothing is told us about the birthplace or lineage of the prophet. His speaking of the King of Israel as our king, has led to the supposition that he was a native of Israel; but, if born in the northern kingdom, his permanent residence was in Judah. Like Amos, he was sent to the north out of Judah, with Jehovah's last yearning message to the Ten Tribes. The sending thus of another prophet after the hostile way in which Amos had been treated, practically illustrates the lesson, which this book of Hosea throughout teaches,—even the long-suffering patience of God, and His unwillingness to give up a people once covenanted to Him, though now they had so sadly lapsed into infidelity. We learn that the prophet stood by the false altars, as Amos had done, and as had been done in the reign of Jeroboam I. by an unnamed prophet. With his own eyes he saw Israel's great sins. (Ch. vi. 10, p. 49). At the very place, where idolatry was rampant, he delivered his burning words. But he wrote his messages later, and in his own land. For we must remember that all the prophets first spoke their prophetic announcements, and then, at a later time, wrote down what they desired to emphasise. In this way their declarations about God's ways of dealing with men have been preserved for us, as a standing testimony to ways in all ages essentially the same, however changed the circumstances of man may be.

All the prophets of Jehovah are signs to their own generation. They embodied in their names, in their life-relationships, and in certain striking actions of their conduct, the truths or lessons they were commissioned to teach. So it was afterwards with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel; so we have seen Jonah represented; so now it is with Hosea. His

married life is made to symbolise, and express the foundation truths, which Hosea felt himself called upon to deliver, as concerning the Divine relationship to Israel. The actual life-history of the prophet, with the sad and painful experiences through which he had been called to pass, first taught him, what he goes forth to teach Israel. Having married one whose life had hitherto been unworthy, and thereby endeavoured to save her, he had been disappointed to find her forsaking him; but with true love he kept her place open for her return, and when she came, extended to her a warm and generous forgiveness.

The relationship between God and Israel is thus set forth. He had chosen Israel, all unworthy of His love, for Himself. He had formed with her a covenant of life; but, alas! Israel had become apostate, and gone away back to her idolatries, or whoredoms, as they are called. God still yearned over her, however; and Hosea is sent forth to declare that Israel will be saved, if even yet, at this the eleventh hour, she returns to her God. This representation of the Divine relationship is found in the New Testament, where the Church is called the "Bride, the Lamb's wife." In this way the closest human relationship, that of marriage, is ennobled by being made the type of the relationship of God to man; and thus we are enabled in larger measure to understand the love of God. But just as sin has so often degraded human marriage, so has sin interrupted the Divine communion and fellowship of God with man. Yet in a human forgiveness is mirrored the Divine attitude; and disciplined by pain, Hosea is made strong to declare a perfect, even a Divine forgiveness.

While monogamy is always presupposed by the prophets as the only true and valid principle of marriage, while they

always forbade concubinage in every form, and while the Law, when finally recognised, secured its condemnation, it must be remembered that in Hosea's time the practice was very imperfect. Then the sanctity of marriage was not so highly regarded, and many things happened which would now be deemed highly improper. Thus practically, marriage was less suitable as a representation of the Divine relationship to man; but from the prophet's own standpoint, with his ideal, we can see how well fitted it was to teach men much about God. On the husband's side an abiding love, never baffled by infidelity; on the wife's side a pressing obligation to remain faithful to a love so great, or to return if she had fallen.

And as Isaiah's sons afterward embodied in their names some Divine message, so now with Hosea. Not his wife alone, and his treatment of her, but his son and daughters also were to be signs to Israel, and to embody in their names aspects of Divine truth. The first-born son was called Jezreel, and so emphasis was given to Hosea's first prophecy against Jehu's House. The plain of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, saw Jehu made king; it should also see his household overthrown. The chief success of Jehu's House, and their destruction, should both alike be witnessed by the Valley of Jezreel. Jezreel has thus its double meaning—sowing and scattering, brought out. Then a daughter is born, and to her is given the name of Lo-Ruhamah, or the *Unpitied One*. In this way confirmation is given to the prophecy, that a day of severe judgment is approaching for Israel, and the day of mercy fast passing away. The third child is called Lo-Ammi, or *Not My People*, indicating that for a season, at least, Israel should be cast off, or should regard herself as cast off, until penitence should bring her back again to God. For Jehu's House there is

to be no relenting on God's part; for the people it is to be otherwise. After the casting off, is to come the ingathering; the Unpitied One is to become the Pitied One; the rejected people, the recognised people of God.

Interest now gathers round the mother of the children. To Hosea's grief she had forsaken him, acting as if she was not his wife; she had gone after other loves, as if he were not her husband. The prophet bids his children plead with their mother: an appeal is made to the maternal instinct, when that to wifely duty had failed. The danger of her unprotected state is shown: the certainty of ruin is pointed out to her should she continue as she was doing: the disappointment which, sooner or later, comes to transgressors is declared. The faithful husband woos back his faithless wife, and shows how he, all the time of her infidelity, has been providing and still provides for her. And thus Israel's folly in thinking that her corn and wine, which a gracious God had supplied, had come from Baal, or some nature god, is made clear. The same God, who had made her corn and wine to abound could take it away; and her infidelity to God would be publicly proclaimed, a punishment very great in the eyes of heathen nations, who do not abandon their gods (Jer. ii. 11). But there must be a time of sad estrangement with all its lessons: fools must learn in the school of experience: Israel must have a wilderness experience again, in a far-off country. After that she would return and be truly affianced, in a renewal of the unalterable bond to her gracious Lord and Master. Idolatry would cease out of the land. How wonderfully was this done; for among the restored people this sin, at least, had no place at all. The forgiving love of God towards sinning men is touchingly set forth in the command,

which doubtless fell in with Hosea's own wish, to restore to his house his erring wife. Even when we were enemies Christ died for us—thus has God made manifest His love (Rom. v. 10). Such love should constrain to love in return, the love of abounding service.

Passing now from personal allusions in his earliest appearances, the prophet enlarges more generally in his next prophecies upon the condition of Israel. The spirit of infidelity is seen in its consequences in the relaxation of morality, for the disregarding of religion is always accompanied by immorality. Israel is wayward and obstinate. Bethel is Bethaven now. The divine pasture is refused; Ephraim is joined to her idols. For a while they must be left alone, until their own folly becomes clear to them. There is a danger, however, of Judah becoming contaminated; so that not only will Israel fall by her iniquity, but Judah also may fall. Warning notes must, therefore, be sounded in Gibeah, in Ramah, in Bethel! Benjamin must be warned in time of coming danger. Looking north, the prophet sees the evil coming down on the land.

The references to the social condition seem to imply that it was a time of anarchy, for the reins of government were very slackly held by Zechariah, Jeroboam's son. The leprosy of Uzziah led to Jotham's regency, when nothing was done to heal Judah's wound, for no act of reparation took place on the part of king or people. Israel looked for help to the Assyrian, as Ahaz was so soon to do, but vainly. Both priest and prophet had failed them. There was no one to contend for them; but this they must find out in their own bitter experience. Then would they return unto the Lord; and the prophet assures a penitent people of

healing mercy, for in grace, as in nature, God's methods are certain and fixed.

How touchingly does the prophet set forth God's unwillingness to give up His people to judgment! And yet how necessary this is! Gilead, once a city of refuge, is now a city of evil-doers. Shechem, also a city of refuge, and a priests' city, is, alas! full of violence and sacrilege. The very throne is surrounded by self-seeking men, and Menahem, now king (744 B.C.), is made their sport. They forget that all these things are before God's face; they do not seek Him to heal them. Like a silly dove, they fly hither and thither, having no fixed line of policy. They invoke help, either from Egypt or from Assyria. It is all the same to them: they do not weigh consequences. Zechariah only reigned six months. Shallum was king but one brief month, when Menahem seized the throne. Pekah, however, was soon his rival. Probably there were factions in the land—one getting support from Egypt, the other from Assyria. But 738 B.C. saw Menahem paying tribute to Assyria, while, in 729 B.C., Hoshea was set on the throne by Egypt. No wonder, that the prophet says such conduct will be a cause of derision among the Egyptians.

In the third division of this portion Israel is in vassalage to Assyria. For thus had Menahem secured his power as against Pekah, who was claiming to be king, with the support of Egypt. Not by Divine consent did these kings reign. The Calves of Dan and Bethel were of no use now. Menahem was soon to sorrow for paying tribute to the great king of Assyria. How sadly the prophet looks back upon the past. God's law had been disregarded in many points in regard to the sacrifices, and God could not accept them. In anger, the prophet declares that such a people must again

be carried away into an Egyptian bondage. They made their own defences; and dishonoured their only Defender. Hence everything would fail them, and they would have to leave their own land,—no more would they be permitted to worship God. Ah! how they would lament their abused privileges then—too late! Foolishly they trusted in Egypt: this they would find to their cost. Confusion and perplexity were now in their councils. No spiritual guidance is now to be had from the leaders and accredited officers of religion. The prophet remembers the days of the sin of Gibeah. He sees all the way a tendency to depart from God; that tendency shown so early at Baal-Peor is now a confirmed thing, and hope is to be abandoned for ever. They are completely cast off, because they did not hearken unto the Voice Divine.

The prophet, in the fourth division, sees Samaria already besieged; he beholds her going into captivity—a wanderer among the nations! The Calf-gods are a cause of anxiety, instead of being a help—the king, what use is he? A shaving on the waters! Such is the terrible punishment of those who refused the yoke of Jehovah; they are yoked now to two idols, which bring ruin upon them. With destruction just staring them in the face, the prophet, almost hopelessly, once more calls to repentance—even at the eleventh hour. He says: "Sow to yourselves mercy, so that you may reap righteousness:"—even now they might ask the Lord to come and teach them righteousness. Hosea is fond of dwelling on the past, and calling to remembrance the goodness of the Lord in the days of old; this he does with the very distinct purpose of rekindling, if possible, the old love, and the fervent devotion of early times. As Jeremiah calls to mind the love of espousals in the wilderness, so does

Hosea speak about the love of God towards Israel His son, when He called him out of Egyptian bondage. Prophet after prophet called them to a steadfast allegiance to this love, for had not God drawn Ephraim to Himself with the bands of love, freeing them from a heavy yoke, and providing for them? That Israel should in such circumstances be so ungrateful, grieves the prophet, but only reveals the depraved tendencies of our race. The abandonment of the Cities of the Plain is remembered, and we think of Abraham interceding for them. How could God treat Israel thus—He who had done so much for them? The prophet foretells the Divine relenting, and beautifully sings of a day of restoration. There is to be chastisement: destruction only in measure, not in entirety. Of the Cities of the Plain, God had made a full end; He would not make a full end of Israel. (Jer. xlvi. 28.)

In the fifth division of this prophecy, we have another lamentation over Ephraim's state, mingled with retrospective glances at what God had done for Jacob in his early days, as he served Laban in Padan-Aram, and strove with the Angel at Jabbok's brook. Once Ephraim had been a power in the land, and chief among the Tribes, but through his pride and sin, the supremacy had passed to Judah. Shiloh had been within Ephraim, but, as we are told in the Psalms (lxxviii. 67), God refused this "tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, and Mount Zion, which He loved." Jeroboam I. owed his elevation to his belonging to this tribe, but this elevation only brought about a momentary success. The trespass in the matter of Baal soon brought about the national, and spiritual death of Ephraim, as a people: they had come and gone as the morning cloud, as the dew of the morning,

which very early goeth away : they were as chaff driven by the whirlwind, and as smoke blown away from the chimney, so soon disappearing ! But with this lamentation over persistent sin, bound up sin, and certain punishment, the prophet again finds place to remind us, that God will yet intervene to prevent Israel's final destruction. He bursts out into a joyful exclamation, as he remembers that God can "save from going down to the pit:" that God can counteract Death's destroying power. God may hide His face from His people for a season, but He will not hide His face from His purpose ; He will remember His covenant. With God is "no variableness nor shadow of turning." The Divine victory over the power of the grave, and hell's destruction here so clearly set before us as bound up in the fulfilment of the covenant, is taken up by Christ and His apostles into a higher sphere : for by the appearing of Christ "He hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light, through the gospel" (2 Tim. i. 10).

Then, in a most beautiful and fitting conclusion to a most touching prophecy, we have a final appeal made to return, and in the certainty of that return, as a fact soon to be brought about by the disciplinary providence of God, the prophet describes the whole attitude, and language, and conduct of God and His pardoned people. Where can we find more touching words? Where can we find a more beautiful picture of reconciliation than that which is here presented to us? The prodigal comes with his confession of sin, and his complete abandonment of his former foolish trusts in men, and in the work of his hands. He who had been virtually fatherless, by leaving his father's house, now findeth mercy in God. Have we not an anticipation here of a true doctrine of Fatherhood, as taught by Christ?—not, indeed,

of a vague, indefinite teaching of a universal Fatherhood by creation, but a Fatherhood in grace, for those, who realise that they are fatherless, and return to God? And then, mark the gracious attitude of God, as we see Him already making robe and ring, shoes and fatted calf ready. He heals the backslider, loves him freely, turns away His anger from him; He supplies his every want, so that he may take new root and flourish in the Home environment—blessed himself and a centre of blessing to others! Ephraim then covenants solemnly to be the Lord's. This covenanting, God responds to, and watches with joy; and when Ephraim exultingly realises that he is now a beautiful tree planted in the House of his God, the gracious reminder comes, "From Me is thy fruit found;" so that God's accepted, pardoned child may always feel that the secret of fruit-bearing is a continual abiding in the love of God. Therefore said Christ, "Abide in Me; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for separated from Me, ye can do nothing" (John xv. 5). O that Israel had allowed such a picture to become a part of their real experience!

Hosea closes with an appeal to common sense. Must not a righteous God have right ways? Must not walking in these ways bring safety and happiness? Assuredly. Then pain and disappointment must be their portion, who refuse to accept the Divine Way. This is the moral of Israel's history—nay, of all history. Those who are in line with God can rest in peace; theirs is the final triumph.

CHAPTER VI.

The Prophecy of Oded (734 B.C.).

(Pp. 61-62.)

The brave way in which Oded, a prophet of Judah, went out, and openly rebuked the victorious Pekah and his army, reminds us of a similarly courageous action performed at an earlier period by another prophet. Shemaiah, at the very beginning of the disastrous civil strife between the two kingdoms, threw himself boldly before Rehoboam, king of Judah, and his army, as they were eager to march forth and punish the revolt of Jeroboam. The prophet forbade such warfare between brethren, and was for the time successful. Speaking in Jehovah's great name, he was obeyed. Had such prophetic guidance been accepted always, the course of history would have been changed.

Similar success attended the brave appearance of Oded at this striking moment. An alliance had been formed between Pekah of Israel, and Rezin of Damascus. Judah had been invaded. The army of Pekah was returning victorious, when a voice, speaking in God's name, and appealing with authority to man's conscience, stays them. Israel's past sins are pointed out, and the danger of aggravating them still more, is dwelt upon.

From the opening of war between Israel and Judah, about 936 B.C. down to 734 B.C., what a picture of sadness do these two centuries present! The degeneracy of Israel, which we have been tracing, in religious matters, is accompanied by a forgetfulness of every tie, that bound them to David's House. The staff of Bands was indeed broken; for now we read that the "Children of Israel carried away captive

of their *brethren* two hundred thousand,—women, sons, daughters, and took also away much spoil from them, and brought the spoil to Samaria." Thus was Jerusalem being spoiled, not by Assyria or Egypt, but by Ephraim. It was not an enemy that did this, but one, a man, their equal, their familiar friend, and their acquaintance!

Hence a prophet of the Lord intervenes, even at this late hour. He clearly recognises and admits, that Judah's sins deserved punishment. The idolatrous Ahaz was rightly trembling on his throne. But there was to be a Divine limit, at this stage, to the chastisement of Jerusalem. Surely Israel would not execute an extreme measure of retribution upon their own kinsfolk! Surely there might be room for some relenting in Israel toward Judah! This the prophet urges. And he makes his appeal on the ground that Israel, even more than Judah, deserved punishment. The principle of, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again," is suggested; and Pekah is pressed to extend mercy, in the full assurance that if he does not, the fierce wrath of the Lord would fall upon him. The prophetic appeal is not in vain. It is responded to by a wave of generous enthusiasm. Room and place are found for forgiveness and kindness. The captives are restored, after having all their wants attended to.

As we read this touching narrative, the wish is strong that Israel had hearkened long ago to the ministry of the prophets. But the day of their visitation is past! This last act of kindness is spasmodic; it is not what they have always done. A few more years only, and Samaria will be in her death-agony. And now we come to prophecies, which look upon this as a thing virtually accomplished, and have warning notes not for Samaria, but for Jerusalem, for Nineveh, and for Edom.

CHAPTER VII.

PROPHECIES ON THE EVE OF SAMARIA'S FALL (734-722 B.C.).

THE FIRST BURDEN OF ZECHARIAH.

(Pp. 62-68.)

There is mention made several times of a prophet of Jehovah, who flourished in the reign of Uzziah, and during the earlier ministry of Isaiah. The name of this prophet is Zechariah, a name, however, common enough among the Jews. Uzziah is said to have sought God "in the days of Zechariah, who had understanding in the visions of the Lord" (2 Chron. xxvi. 5.) In Isaiah's prophecies (viii. 2), Zechariah, the son of Jeberechiah, is referred to as a faithful and trustworthy witness of an important prophetic announcement. These, however, may not have been one and the same person. At the same time it is interesting to notice that there are certain prophecies bound up along with those of the post-exilian Zechariah, which are now generally believed to belong to a period very much earlier —a time when Assyria was threatening Judah. Perhaps, then, the author of these prophecies was called Zechariah; perhaps he was the same with the Zechariah mentioned above. At any rate, the fact of his having the same name may account for his words being bound up with those of the much later prophet of the same name. This is true, however, that the portions now before us are anonymous.

Very little information is vouchsafed in Scripture about the names and personal history of the messengers of Jehovah; and thereby our attention is emphatically drawn rather to the message, than to the messenger. In the

editorial heading of the later prophecy, Zechariah is called the son of Berechiah ; an identification of the two prophets may thus have easily occurred at a time, when critical studies were imperfect. Many differences,— differences, indeed, which lie on the surface, have been discovered between the last portions and the first eight chapters of Zechariah. These earlier chapters deal with a distinct class of visions peculiar to the time of the later prophet, and form a complete whole. With chapter ix. a new opening is made. The prophet speaks about the "burden of the Lord" in the style of the earlier prophets of the Assyrian period ; while the references to Syria, which the land of Hadrach is now understood to mean, imply a date before the time of Assyria's invasion of Jerusalem.

In these concluding chapters there are two burdens. The first is in chapters ix.-xi. ; the second in chapters xii.-xiv. In the first, which now lies before us, the coming fall of Samaria is spoken of ; while in the second there is evidence of Jerusalem having suffered invasion, and being exposed to conditions, very different from those which prevailed in Isaiah's time. Such considerations bid us study, first of all, and at this stage, the first burden, reserving the second for consideration further on.

The historical references of the first burden point to the time, when Israel was in the convulsions of her last years— those terrible years of anarchy and misrule, on which we have already cast our eye. Damascus is in danger, if it has not already fallen (732 B.C.). The conquering armies of Assyria surround Hadrach, a place frequently mentioned on the Assyrian Inscriptions in close connection with Damascus. Hamath, Tyre, Zidon, and the Philistines, are all to feel the force of this terrible wave of invasion, as they would suffer

from its effects. But uttering his message from Jerusalem, and inspired, as a contemporary of Isaiah would be, by the Divinely-given assurance, that not yet would Zion fall, the prophet speaks with confidence of the Divine protection, which would secure the safety and deliverance of his own people. He declares, that Jehovah would interpose in some signal manner for this purpose, encamping about His House, and dispelling every enemy that should come against it.

The prophet's mind is full of hope, as he looks forward and sees some great and worthy descendant of David bringing deliverance to Zion, and returning in triumph from the slaughter of his foes. Of such a king Isaiah spoke when his expectations gathered round the coming king, his royal pupil, Hezekiah. In the person of this king, Jehovah would save His people, and extend their boundaries as in former glorious days. Such a deliverance, as is here foretold, occurred when Sennacherib's hosts so suddenly vanished from the very gates of Jerusalem. The natural consequences of such a deliverance are then dwelt upon, by way of stimulus and encouragement. What might be done by a truly obedient people is then set forth; and if the prophetic details were not all fulfilled, the reason is easily found in the refusal of Jerusalem to avail herself of the whole panoply of God, and to become strong by righteousness. Here is the picture. A delivered people will be a reunited people; all their enemies, even those in the western colonies of Ionia (if we retain this clause), would be brought into subjection. As declared by Isaiah (xxx. 30), "the Lord shall cause His glorious voice to be heard": or by Habakkuk (iii. 12), God shall "march through the world in indignation, and thresh the heathen in anger." Such a

time the prophet hoped for when Ahaz's evil reign should cease.

A reign of peace shall, also, be a time of prosperity for all classes. In such a picture, we have an illustration of a perfect time, or, as we are accustomed to call it, a Messianic Day. The true King, who will bring salvation and peace to His people—that King, who alone embodies all excellence, and brings about all felicity, is the true Messiah; and in joining with many in Jerusalem, in casting our crowns at His feet, we hail in Jesus of Nazareth this Divine King (Matt. xxi. 9). Of this king the hoped for Son of David was a type.

And the same Divine glory, which was to be made manifest in such a great deliverance from Assyrian invasion, can be continually seen in the wonders of creation. Jehovah, the God of Israel, is the Maker also of heaven and earth. To Him should every knee bow in prayer; He alone should be enquired of. The symbols of divination, and all the dreams of diviners, should be cast aside, for they are vain. The people, who seek unto these false oracles find no comfort; they are unshepherded. When Judah was in perplexity, Ahaz foolishly resorted to the consultation of such things as the God-forsaken Saul, and the God-forsaken kings of Israel now did (Isaiah viii. 19).

Then comes a striking reference to the condition of Israel at this time. Such a passage recalls words in Jeremiah and Ezekiel; but these latter prophets may as easily have been influenced by our prophet as he by them. For Israel was truly without a shepherd, when the Divine anger was so fiercely burning against the shepherds, and punishing the goats. That anger burned against Pekah and Hoshea in Israel, as also against Ahaz in Judah. But while stating

this fact, which was for Israel to mean so much so soon, the prophet speaks words of hope to the whole people, shewing them what God could do for them, if they would only trust Him. Out of Him all equipment for war could come; He could make them "more than conquerors."

Yet clearly this hope is not to be realised. A captivity must come with all its sifting discipline. The prophet sees that the Ten Tribes must be scattered in Assyria and Egypt, the two rival powers at this time dominating the destiny of Israel. As Gilead had already been devastated (734 B.C.), so would all Samaria, but afterwards there would be issued a Divine summons, and the banished ones would return.

Mercy and judgment thus go hand in hand. Although harassed and in danger, God's people are always prisoners of hope, and can find their refuge in God. Many deliverances has God wrought for His people from the Exodus up to now. In Sennacherib's retirement; in Cyrus' edict; in Alexander's passing-by; in the Macabbæan victories—yes, in all these events, but best of all on Calvary, has Jehovah taken up His people's cause. Verily, as the prophecy opens by saying, the Eye of the Lord is ever upon His own people.

Captivity is now looked upon as a necessarily coming event. Hence the prophet addresses himself to its purposes and uses. With Hosea our prophet declares that when far away, sown among the nations, the captives would remember God. Thus would a time of trial become a means of blessing, and the blood of martyrs become the seed of the Church of the future. The prophet recalls a former time of captivity in Egypt, when Joseph was forgotten, and this makes him think with delight upon the great Exodus. Once before, God had passed through the

sea of their affliction, and smitten the waves. He can and will do so again. Boastful Assyria will not for ever hold in bondage the tribes of God.

Now, however, for a brief space, Assyria must carry all before her. Lebanon first, then Bashan, feels her powerful touch; but soon the Valley of Jordan and the whole land of Israel is to be filled with tumult and howling. Thus the Assyrian swept down from North to South in terrible force, "as a wolf on the flock." The prophet sees the whole thing before his eyes.

There was nothing to prevent Samaria's fall, but, on the contrary, much to hasten it. The prophet is deeply concerned about the way, in which Israel had been misgoverned. He represents the Divine grief in a striking manner; for he tells us that he is bidden to perform two symbolic actions—thus so graphically to embody two important truths, which God desired His people to remember at this crisis. In every sense the state of the land was deplorable. There were both moral and social anarchy and disorganisation. The responsibility of doing something towards putting things right is laid upon the prophet, by the Lord his God. He takes two staffs—the first to represent the Divine interest and covenant, which he calls Grace, or Favour; the second to represent the brotherly relationship that once was, and that he desires again to see between Israel and Judah, which he calls Bands or Union.

The first staff is broken, and thereby is set forth the fact, that Israel's shepherds had refused to acknowledge the Chief Shepherd. This, to his pain, the prophet saw. The Divine protection is, therefore, withdrawn. Israel's three shepherds, in rapid succession, all within a year, are cut off: they abhorred God, and His soul loathed them. The

covenant, which had guaranteed Israel's continuance so long, now ends by its rejection on Israel's part.

Then the second staff is broken, too, in token that an alliance between Israel and Judah, in which Ephraim might not envy Judah, and Judah not vex Ephraim, is for the time an impossibility. Alone and by itself, Israel is to fall; for Judah nearly a century and a half of grace has yet to run (722-588 B.C.). In happier conditions, Ezekiel (xxxvii. 16) foretells a reunion of the Tribes.

The prophet declares his disappointment. His services are refused; he is turned about his business. There is cutting, scathing sarcasm in the words "a goodly price," used to describe the paltry wages paid him. His services are so unappreciated, that only the wages of a disregarded slave are given him. In this rejection of one Divinely-sent to shepherd Israel, and in his treatment, there is an illustration of the return man so often gives to God. What God claims He does not get; what God gives is not valued. The stone He chooses is rejected. All this is taken note of by Him; the poor wages are paid into the Treasury. In this rejection of the shepherd, the inspired evangelists found an illustration of a greater rejection, even that of Christ, God's Son.

And now God's sword of justice falls upon the last shepherd of the Northern Kingdom. He smites the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. The high dignity of the king, as the anointed of the Lord, even His fellow in the delegated duty of government, accounts for such an unworthy person, as Hoshea, being called "My Shepherd; My Fellow." In such times kings were Jehovah's representatives, even as His Sons set upon His Holy Hill of Zion. In the England of former days, divinity was supposed "to hedge a king," while they were supposed to rule by "Divine right." But

this Divine right is a right and duty to govern well. A failure in the discharge of kingly duty, entails a forfeiture of kingly right. In Israel the ideal of a king had been lost; hence he must be smitten. This smiting, however, in vindication of righteousness, is to bring deliverance to a much-wronged people. While the sword of justice must punish, it would be wielded by a Divine Hand, which would guard them from destruction. The remnant, even a third part, should be brought through the hottest fire; they would thus be refined, as gold is tried. Discipline would yield peaceable fruits; the disciplined ones should, by-and-bye, respond to the Divine claim, by saying: "Yes, Jehovah is our God."

We are told that Christ quoted this Old Testament passage on the eve of His own death: this He did to comfort His disciples. He was truly the Shepherd, who was going to give His life for the sheep: when this should happen, they would, for the moment, be made to stumble, and be scattered. Soon, however, would the Divine Hand be turned upon them: Christ assured them that He would rise again, and go before them into Galilee (Matt. xxvi. 31). As we have occasion frequently to observe in reading the prophets, and marking the use made of their words in the New Testament quotations, the primary historical application to events, right under the prophet's notice, is emphatically clear, while the Old Testament prophecy is made the illustration of abiding spiritual principles, continually exemplified in the case of Christ. A prophetic declaration of God's mind and will for any age, contains within itself the kernel of a Divine principle, that must, again and again, be embodied in human history. This, the Evangelists and Apostles recognised: hence their free use of the Old Testament references. Perhaps, we have not always done justice to them in this matter.

Perhaps, we have too often read dogmatic considerations into their simpler quotations. And, though this is true, it concerns only the interpretations of passages; these dogmatic considerations may and do remain unaffected. Here we may see, in Zechariah's prophecy, a delineation of the great sacrifice of Calvary: the Divine smiting, the scattering and the gathering: but the fact is grander and fuller than the prophetic statement. In Zechariah, the Shepherd was smitten for his own wickedness; he brought calamity on his people; he was in no true sense divine. Would we learn about Christ, and His Cross, we must come to Himself.

The value of our prophecy, as a message to the prophet's own times was great. This value was in no wise lessened by its being rejected. Kings and all rulers may learn from it still, as they seek to appreciate the responsibility of their position, and to discharge their God-given functions in the fear of the Lord. If they fail, the sword, which they wrongly use, shall awake against themselves.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Prophecy of Micah (742-690 B.C.).

(Pp. 68-82.)

The period referred to in the editorial heading of this prophecy is probably the whole time occupied by the ministry of Micah. The main part of his prophecy falls in the reign of Hezekiah, while the last portion must have been uttered in the dark and disappointing days of Manasseh. The heading does not bring the prophet's ministry into his reign; but perhaps the last chapters were added

subsequently. As we have mentioned already, extant prophecies only contain portions of the spoken messages of the prophets—such portions, probably, as were best fitted to emphasise their distinctive burden; while they were arranged in the form we have them now, with their headings, at a much later period.

Micah was the contemporary of a greater prophet. He lived during the same time as Isaiah, who entered upon his ministry, when Jotham received full kingly powers, on the death of Uzziah, and continued his labours through many vicissitudes, until he suffered a martyr's death in Manasseh's reign. But there is this difference. Isaiah carried on his work under the eye of the king, almost entirely in the capital of his country. Micah was engaged among the people and in the provinces. While the one concerned himself with the kings of Judah, and great questions of international policy, the other had to do with the people, and the always momentous matters of truth and righteousness. But Micah's words were memorable words. His solemn declaration of coming judgment against Zion and Jerusalem must have made a very deep impression. Of this we find evidence in the way in which Jeremiah speaks of it (ch. xxvi.) This reference of Jeremiah helps to fix clearly the date of Micah's words; for these, we are told, were uttered in Hezekiah's reign, and at a time when this king, by his careless conduct, was belying the hopes of an earlier day. We know that Isaiah was deeply disappointed with this king about 710 B.C., when he was sent to him to tell him that his sickness was to be unto death. But the king "besought the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which he had pronounced against them." The king recovered, and God's judgment was postponed. Not yet

was Zion to be "plowed as a field," and Jerusalem to "become heaps, and the mountain of the Lord's House," to be as "the high places of the forest." But about this time such a prophecy, as this, would have been suitably delivered.

The name "Micah" means "Like unto Jehovah," and is a shortened form for Micaiah, the name of a brave and courageous prophet, in the time of Ahab. Like King Ahaz, with whose idolatries Micah must have been too sadly familiar, Ahab refused to listen to the voice of Jehovah's prophets. Of Micaiah, he said, "I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me, but evil." An element of sadness enters into the experience of every prophet; for they have often to speak, what the Lord saith unto them, to a disobedient and unwilling people. And just as Micaiah was forbidden to speak by his earthly king, so was Micah forbidden to speak by the people, who wanted things more agreeable to be uttered in their hearing.

Nothing is told us about the prophet, save his birthplace, which was Moresheth-Gath, in the Plain of Philistia. A country-born man, he spent his life in the country. As to the subject of his prophecy, the great bulk of it concerns Judah. Only in the first chapters is there any reference to Samaria, the kingdom of the Ten Tribes. And this reference pretty accurately determines the date of the prophecy contained in them. No hope is held out; manifestly Samaria's doom is near. Her wound is incurable; her day of grace is over. Soon Samaria, Ephraim's capital, is to be a heap of the field—a complete ruin. As this happened in 722 B.C., Micah's words must have been spoken some years before this date. The rest of the prophecy concerns Judah. The prophet sees that his own people have been contaminated by the idolatries of Samaria;

and declares that the same punishment, so soon to fall on Israel, must overtake them too. The provinces of Judah suffered terribly at the hands of Sargon, as we learn from Isaiah (ch. x.). How distinctly and boldly does the prophet denounce sin, and foretell coming judgment! He bids all give an attentive ear to what he speaks, as God's witness. He sees the great Judge coming out of His place to punish iniquity. And he does not mince matters. He traces the corruption of both kingdoms to the evil example of the capitals. Jerusalem, under Ahaz, and Samaria, under a number of idolatrous kings, had been the centre of a bad influence, which had done much harm in the country. Hence upon the capitals would God's wrath fall first; and, as the prophet sees the gathering storm, he is deeply moved, and pours out his heart in lamentation. Like a pestilence or contagious disease, he observes the sin of Samaria spreading in Judah, even to the very gate of Jerusalem. His grief flows forth in a rapid survey of his country's towns; and as each comes before him, its name affords him some striking thing to say. Gath, which means "declaring," makes him wish that such coming evil might not have to be declared. Accho, which means "weeping," in the same way suggests the weeping, that must so soon come. And thus onward he passes from town to town, seeking to emphasise his sorrow, by dwelling on the signification of their names. The reader would do well to study these names (as they are explained in the Glossary), for he will get therefrom an insight into the prophet's style.

The lamentation is followed by the condemnation of outstanding sins, such as covetousness and oppression, which would inevitably lead to punishment, and deprivation of privilege. But in so speaking, he rouses opposition; men

never do care to hear the truth concerning their own doings. Contrary to their own truest interests, they try to silence the prophetic voice. Instead of dismissing the prophets, they should rather have purified the land from those, who were stirring up rebellion against Jehovah, and treating widows and orphans with cruel injustice. "Visiting the widow and the fatherless" was forgotten, and the land was polluted. In such circumstances false prophets were listened to. For men always keep up a form of religion; bad men seek for the patronage of religious forms, that so their sins may be covered over.

Like a ray of light, in the midst of a storm, come the cheering words about reunion and restoration that follow; they stand alone, however, in these two verses, almost interjected forcibly between passages, that speak of evil things. Thus, while fidelity to truth always compelled the prophets to denounce the certain results of sin, their belief in a living God bade them be of good hope concerning the coming days, when chastisement should have done its own work. A time of deliverance, of breaking through all prison walls, is anticipated and promised. Such a time is truly Messianic; but all deliverances are wrought by God; He is ever at the head of His ransomed people. Such faith the prophets ever had; and it shows an entire want of appreciation of the prophetic character to make all hopeful passages exilic.

After this brief statement of brighter days, the denunciation of sin is continued; and now the unjust rulers and the false prophets come in for condemnation. Both ruler and false prophet were eager for gain; each was satisfied only, when plenty filled their cup. To both shall be shame: God will refuse to listen to their prayers—He shall have no respect to such men. With the true prophet it is always

otherwise. He is filled with power by the Holy Spirit, and is enabled, with fidelity and courage, to declare unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his sin. And notwithstanding all this abounding sin, there was yet an outward profession of religion. They used Isaiah's grand word Immanuel. Then, as later, in Jeremiah's time, men were taking comfort to themselves by saying: "Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us." But they forgot that the Lord only truly dwells among men that honour Him by keeping His law, and walking in His ways; the Divine promise of "no evil" is only for those, who love and practise righteousness. Such conditions, however, being wholly absent, Micah has to give utterance to a most striking and solemn statement. Not only was it not true that no evil should come; it was on the other hand terribly true that most signal evil should come. Just such evil as Micah had seen falling upon Samaria, would soon come on Jerusalem, if she continued in her present course. About this he had no doubt whatever. He had no superstition about the inviolability of the City of David.

Part II.

The second division of Micah's prophecy opens with an older prophecy quoted by Isaiah also (ch. ii.), a prophecy that must have been very popular in Jerusalem. The declaration of solemn and severe judgment against the city with which the first part closed naturally recalled to Micah this promise, that the Mountain of the Lord's House would be established at the head of all mountains, and that Jerusalem should be the religious centre of the world. And this would be the question: How can these two things be reconciled? To this the prophet addresses himself. His solu-

tion involves this first, that the judgment is conditional, viz., on Judah continuing in sin ; and this secondly, that the promise is conditional, viz., on Judah honouring Jehovah. So that there is no contradiction whatever. All that is necessary to ward off the blow, and realise the promise, is a firm and determined walking in the Name of the Lord their God. The realisation of the promise is quite possible. Fidelity to Jehovah would end all halting, and restore the kingdom to Jerusalem. Thus the old oracle affords ground for a most earnest exhortation to the people to walk in God's ways.

But about this time there was much anxiety ; there was fear upon every side. Sargon's hosts caused alarm, and trust in Jehovah seemed all abandoned. Evil was rampant. Hence a terrible invasion is spoken of, endangering Jerusalem herself. The mention of Babylonia here raises a difficulty, unless this country be regarded as simply a province of the then paramount power, Assyria. If the words were inserted by a later scribe, and formed no part of the original text, the difficulty is removed, for the prophet foretells triumph to Jerusalem in the very hour of crisis. He sees her going forth from the city, and, contrary to all expectation, being delivered from the hand of her enemies. This happened when Sennacherib was overthrown : her contemptuous foes did not look upon Zion, and defile her sacred courts. The LXX. inserts " from Babylon," in v. 8, after the words " the kingdom shall come : " and the same thing may well have been done here. For in later days the deliverance from Babylon was the one sublime fact that filled men's minds, even as the Exodus had done in earlier days.

When Isaiah, in Jerusalem, was promising to King Hezekiah a deliverance from the foes that would soon gather against him, Micah was speaking in similar language to the

country-folk ; for God has always one message to His people at any given time. The prophets know "the thoughts of the Lord, and understand His counsel." The threats and gatherings of the foe were only the prelude to their own destruction. More particularly was this true concerning Assyria, here picturesquely called the Daughter of Troops, from her military grandeur. Against this haughty empire Judah would again send forth, as in David's days, a conqueror out of Bethlehem. By this is meant a true Davidic Prince—one belonging to David's royal House. When Sennacherib was defeated, this prophecy found its first fulfilment. The seven shepherds and eight princes tell us of the mighty host of defenders that God would, on this occasion, raise up—seven being indicative of a perfect host, and eight of a superabundant provision. A victorious people shall then be a happy and rejoicing nation ; nay, some sense of obligation to God for His goodness, in this great deliverance, would lead to the purification of the land from idolatry. The imperfections of man, and the limitations of his best service, alone prevented the words of the prophet from finding complete realisation.

This promised deliverance from Assyria is, of course, a type of the great salvation. As of yore God raised up a Davidic Prince to vindicate His name and righteousness in the execution of His fury upon disobedient peoples, so has He done in Christ, born for our redemption in Bethlehem. This prophecy is Messianic, inasmuch as it transcends in its spiritual fulness and significance any one common event, and reaches forth to what is supernatural. What God hath purposed from the beginning is a world-wide deliverance.

Part III.

A PROPHETIC REMONSTRANCE.

In the portion of Micah's prophecy now before us, we have words of a much later period than those, which have been engaging our attention. They seem to have been uttered in a time of decay, when the prophet was disappointed. Such a time would be that of Manasseh, who re-established the idolatries, which his father Hezekiah had overthrown. And hence the prophetic remonstrance—his earnest statement of the Lord's controversy with His people. God's goodness to Israel is recalled; their ingratitude is surpassing strange. Penitence is urged, and the conditions of heart and life required by God are clearly set forth—these conditions of doing justice, loving mercy, and a humble walking with God, being the moral requirement of God, the same in all ages. The violation of any one, or all of these moral conditions is inconsistent with a true religious life. Religious purity demands perfect honesty in all departments and relations of the outward life. The professors of religion will not avail to procure any kind of abiding success; while idolatry would certainly make even a professing people a reproach among the nations. The lamentation that follows is one of great sadness. The prophet feels himself almost alone. He looks around in vain for a witnessing people. All classes are degenerate; corruption is rampant; and good men have a hard time of it. For all this judgment must come! The prophet utters words of warning. Families are broken up: friends are separated: all confidence in man is undermined. Hence the prophet looks to God in calm assurance, for him light

will arise in darkness; a day of vindication must come, all the enemies of God and of God's people must be trodden down under foot. The desolation that is so soon to come will be followed by restoration. A people, driven into captivity because of their sins, will return, when chastisement has been accomplished. For this the prophet prays to the One Shepherd of Israel, and Jehovah gives a favourable answer to his prayer. Hence the joyful conclusion, in which the character of God shines out so brightly, as a God of perfect Mercy, and worthy of supreme worship. Faith in a Divine Covenant, in a Covenant-keeping God, sustains the prophet, and bids him triumph over every fear. Who is like this God? This is the meaning of Micah's name, and the burden of his message.

CHAPTER IX.

The Reigns of Manasseh and Amon (698-642 B.C.). Jerusalem's dark day.

(Pp. 83-86.)

Reaction is the law of history. The brilliant administration of Oliver Cromwell was followed by the strange enthusiasm, that welcomed Charles II. to the throne. Doubtless the strain and pressure of a time of high ideals, and almost extreme devotion to duty, led to the relaxation so marked in 1660 A.D. Hezekiah had seen in Jerusalem a time of such devotion to duty, and a full flowing wave of earnest spiritual reformation. The year 700 B.C. marked a high tide in Judah's spiritual history. God had defended the City of David for His own Name's sake. Isaiah saw the

best hopes of his life realised, and many of his prophecies grandly fulfilled. But, alas ! how shortlived are such times in a nation's history ! Hezekiah soon dies, and power passes into the hands of ministers of State, who favoured a policy different from that which Isaiah had laboured so long to inculcate, and which, after many delays, he had at length seen his royal pupil and patron adopt. The continuity of policy, which had frequently been secured in Jerusalem by an aged king taking his son as co-regent, was now broken. Manasseh was only a boy of twelve when his father died. He was by no means a delight unto Jehovah. He missed his father's guidance at a very critical time in a boy's life. It would appear that, like Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, he threw himself into the hands of men, who were not the truest or worthiest of all advisers. Many among them would be of opinion, that Sennacherib would soon be back again, terribly enraged by his momentary defeat ; they would counsel the formation of an alliance with a power so great. Others, again, would be in sympathy with the popular rites of worship at the High places, which Hezekiah had so completely abolished. They would listen to the many priests still fretting over their forcible removal from the old altars, and they would counsel the restoration of the old customs of the times of Ahaz. Hezekiah, thus, would not be long dead before a reaction would set in with full force, both in civil and religious affairs. The order would go forth for the rebuilding of the High places, as soon as the drift of Manasseh's views was discerned. All the old abominations of the time of Ahaz were speedily in practice again; Hezekiah's life-work seemed all undone. Isaiah once again was in deep despair ; and his faithful words of remonstrance only brought upon himself a martyr's

death. For, whether or not the tradition be true that Isaiah was sawn to death in Manasseh's reign, it cannot be doubted that he fell a victim at a time, when Jerusalem was filled, from one end to another, with innocent blood.

This great prophet must have been the most prominent of those, who condemned Manasseh's idolatries. He it must have been whose duty it was to voice Jehovah's denunciation of the royal conduct in his utter disregard of the Divine law, and profanation of the temple on Mount Zion. He, who had so often proclaimed that God would defend Jerusalem, must now have had the painful necessity laid upon him of declaring a message so very different, even one of judgment, that would make both the ears of him that heard it tingle. The fate of Samaria and the Ten Tribes is referred to by way of warning. Already had Isaiah told Hezekiah that days of terrible captivity were in store for Jerusalem, but the burden of his prophecy had been deliverance. The events of Manasseh's reign would only intensify the prophet's belief and conviction that Jehovah would yet have to do unto Jerusalem, as He had done unto Samaria. And the whole tendency of Judah had been to depart from the living God. Only by the persistent efforts of great prophets had gross abuses been checked from time to time ; but, like fires fed from hidden sources, these only appeared again in all their old virulence. Elijah and Isaiah had stayed the downward course, alas ! only for a time ! Their heroic efforts passed away, and their successors fell on degenerate days.

It would have been interesting to know for certain the prophets who flourished in Manasseh's reign ; but the Bible is silent here. Micah must have died soon after Isaiah. Nahum appeared next in the prophetic succession. This, at

least, we may be sure of, God never leaves Himself without living witnesses. The evil doings of Manasseh did not pass without earnest and incessant rebuke, and though for some eighteen years the thoughtless young man had gone on without giving heed to earnest words of warning, God did not leave him alone. A severer warning came to him in the form of a terrible disgrace inflicted upon him by the Assyrian army. Sennacherib did not return to Judah. He died in 681 B.C. But Esar-haddon, his son and successor, was not long in seeking to punish those who had tarnished the glory of Nineveh. In 680 B.C., Jerusalem is invaded, and Manasseh is taken captive, being, according to the barbarous Assyrian custom, which is illustrated by the sculptures, led away with a hook in his nose. In this his season of affliction he humbled himself, and sought the Lord. His prayer was heard: his captivity came to an end: terms of tribute were agreed to (676 B.C.): his life was changed. The lesson of this severe chastisement was learnt. Manasseh saw that Assyria could not be his friend. He recognised the duty of abandoning his idolatrous ways.

This repentance of Manasseh was followed by a new life. The activities of reformation were seen in every direction. New hope and vigour characterised his rule. The city's fortifications were attended to; during his period of careless self-indulgence these had been neglected. But what was better, the idolatries of his earlier days were discountenanced, and the Temple of Jehovah, which had been so seriously profaned, was again set apart to the alone worship of Jehovah. A purer atmosphere surrounded both king and court. But royal commands cannot cure a people's disease. In vain was the king's wish expressed that the High places should not be used; they remained as occasions

for idolatry. A very much more drastic reform was needed —a reform that came when Josiah and Jeremiah insisted on the essential principle of Deuteronomy being adopted, even the recognition of one centre of worship, and the removal of all the High places. The whole history of Israel shews that the existence of these High places led to idolatry; purity of religion required their absolute removal. Even though, in the reigns of good kings, the people might use these places aright for the worship of the Lord their God only, as now, their existence furnished an opportunity only too convenient for idolatrous services. Hence, over and over again, we meet with this statement—"But the High places were not removed," as a qualification of the merit of certain kings. Josiah stands high in estimation because of his removal of these places. (1 Kings xv. 14; xx. 43; 2 Kings xii. 3, &c.)

Manasseh continued from 676 to 643 B.C. to reign in the fear of the Lord. He was succeeded by his son Amon, who only reigned for the brief space of about two years. Unfortunately this brief reign was evil in God's sight; for the king ordered his life, not according to the later and better conduct of his father, but repeated over again the sins and follies of which that father had been guilty in his earlier years. The severe chastisement, that had so influenced Manasseh was forgotten by the time that Amon came to years of maturity. Born about eleven years after his father's restoration, he would have twenty years between his youth and that event. And perhaps, according to the sad law of human life, Manasseh's older years may have been characterised by a relaxation of his former earnestness. Under these circumstances Amon grew up. So that his accession to the throne was signalised by the reappearance of old idolatries. It seems, however, that Amon was not popular in the royal household; for he

was put to death by a conspiracy among his own court establishment. This conduct on their part was not approved of by the nation. They were speedily punished, and Amon's son, though still a very young man, was put in his father's place. With the accession of Josiah a new era begins in Jerusalem—a day bright with every promise. The hopes of the good and true, who had heard Isaiah in the days of their youth, rose high. But this era came too late to save Jerusalem from the crisis of her fate; and brightest hopes were dashed to the ground on the field of Megiddo (610 B.C.), when Josiah was mourned as few kings have been.

CHAPTER X.

The Prophet Nahum (700-650 B.C.).

(Pp. 86-92.)

Nahum follows Micah and Isaiah, in the true prophetic and apostolic succession. His concern is with the great Assyrian Empire, which had threatened Jerusalem so long; it is his business to declare that the time of Nineveh's doom is near. Isaiah had, in distinct terms, foretold the overthrow of this great power, and he, with Nahum, had already received an instalment of the fulfilment of this prophecy in Sennacherib's withdrawal from the gates of Jerusalem, so unexpected after his victory at El-Tekeh. When Isaiah died, with his prophetic programme yet unfulfilled, Nahum is raised up to bear witness to the certainty of its being soon completed. Nahum is, thus, Isaiah's true successor. He tells us not of instalment, but of full payment in the matter of Assyria's destruction. And yet, more than fifty years had to pass before Nineveh fell! For we can fix

the date of Nahum's prophecy with considerable certainty. He tells us about the overthrow of Thebes, or No-Amon, an event which had been accomplished by the Assyrian king, Asurbanipal, in 662 B.C.; and this affords a ground of warning to Nineveh—for what seemed so unlikely as the fall of such a city? Thus Nahum prophesied after this date. There is also a reference to the death of Sennacherib, he being murdered in 681 B.C. by his own sons. The prophet (p. 87) speaks about the Temple of the Assyrian king becoming his grave. This circumstance showed Nahum how Isaiah's prophecy was finding fulfilment. But Judah had fallen on evil times, as Micah's last words abundantly prove, and the historical records show. Manasseh, an idolatrous king, now reigned in Jerusalem, and paid large tribute to Assyria. It seemed as if the promised overthrow of Assyria was farther off than ever. At such a time, one bearing such a name, and bringing such a message as Nahum, would be truly welcome. His name means Consolation, and in the courageous declaration of the certain and speedy overthrow of Nineveh, he brought truest consolation.

Nothing certain is known about the private history of the prophet. Elkosh is the name of a village in Galilee, and also of a place near Nineveh. Perhaps he had been carried into captivity along with his townsfolk, when as yet a child, or had been born in captivity in full view of Nineveh. From his foreign home, and with full knowledge of the locality, he comes down to comfort Zion, with a message of the speedy doom of Nineveh. We are not told where Nahum spoke; but if he ventured into Jerusalem with his reminder that Jehovah would yet fulfil His word, the guilty Manasseh, like Herod in later days, may well have been seized with remorse. About 680 B.C., the way was

being prepared for the reception of a divinely-sent prophet.

The three chapters of Nahum's prophecy divide themselves into two portions. In the first, Jehovah's character and abiding relationship to His people is set forth: in the second, Jehovah's relation to Nineveh, His people's chief foe, is declared. True comfort always depends on a right appreciation of the Divine character. This, first of all, Nahum seeks to give. For Nahum emphasises the foundation aspect of Jehovah held by the prophets, as a God ever seeking to vindicate righteousness. He then eloquently dwells upon the glorious power of God, and bids His despairing people find in Him a stronghold in the day of their trouble, being fully assured that He knows them, that put their trust in Him.

The words, that follow, speak about the signal overthrow of Sennacherib, and his sad and disgraceful death at the hands of his own children. The prophet's appeal to Assyria is striking. "What do ye think of Jehovah?" he asks. This question is translated, "What do ye imagine against the Lord?" in the Revised Version, and we know that our human plans against God all rest upon our imperfect thoughts of His glory. Nineveh had always been characterised by a boastful spirit, unduly exaggerating her own strength in her ignorance of Jehovah's might. All such pride was a sure herald of a coming destruction. It has been thought that the reference to one here imagining evil against the Lord, and counselling wickedness, was some Jewish statesman, like Shebna, false to the traditions of his country, and opposed to the policy of trust in Jehovah only. If so, such an one would dwell on the power of Nineveh, and would advise an alliance with her. In

answer, Nahum declares that present power would not suffice to prevent a speedy overthrow. Though the Assyrian Empire had been oppressive towards Judah, this would soon cease. This yoke would soon be broken. Disgrace would soon overwhelm both the king, and his capital; for, weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, they had been found wanting. This glad event Nahum already regards as an accomplished thing; and he points a delivered people to the messengers bringing such good tidings—he sees them hastening over the mountains with news, so welcome as the fall of the great oppressor. The prophet then graphically describes the capture of Nineveh. The town is besieged by one that dasheth in pieces—the instrument of God's wrath. The guards are called out: the fortifications are strengthened. But all in vain! Panic seizes the once valiant defenders of Nineveh. A Divine decree (Huzzab) has gone forth, and the palaces of Assyria are exposed to the spoiler. This all means the deliverance of Judah, and is a step in the restoration of the glory of Israel. For here the prophet thinks of a reunited people, a hope that was now beginning to grow up among the prophets. And it is worthy of note that Israel becomes the name applied by the later prophets to the whole people. The destruction of Nineveh, soon to be followed by that of Babylon, was the first stage in a movement towards this desired end. The process of emptying God's vineyard had gone on apace; it was to end at length.

Nineveh had stood for a long time, resplendent in her glory. As Jeremiah described Babylon, she dwelt "upon many waters, abundant in treasures"! What the Nile was to Thebes, the Euphrates was to Babylon, the Tigris was to Nineveh. Canals abounded, and fertility was great. No

wonder that the heart of Nahum melted, and that his knees shook as he realised the fall of such a city! This, however, was his message of comfort to Jerusalem,—"Nineveh shall fall."

And the destruction of such a city is no arbitrary or exceptional procedure on the Divine part. It is not simply for the deliverance of Judah. Abiding principles of righteousness are involved here. Nineveh was a lion's den—a bloody and deceitful city. Her iniquity was full before her destruction came. A great military power, such as Assyria was, might have done some good for God and for man, if it had been well directed; but when self-aggrandisement and self-indulgence were the only aims, moral degeneration, spreading malaria around, was the only result of victory to such a power. Hence the prophet sees clearly and strongly the reason and necessity of Nineveh's overthrow. A moral reason, a righteous necessity, existed for the sweeping away of such a power. Twice over and most emphatically the prophet tells us that God was against such a city, and when this is so, its destruction is not far away.

A fate similar to that which Nahum declares against Nineveh had only recently happened to a city as great and glorious. Thebes, here called No-Amon, surrounded by the Nile and her tributary canals, had been captured by the Assyrian king. This had once seemed very improbable to those who dwelt proudly and securely in this great city. Let Nineveh take warning, and trust not in appearances! Her ambassadors had gone far and wide: they would soon be no more heard. Her merchants had been multiplied, as the stars of heaven, but they would soon flee away. Their place would know them no more for ever. For long Nineveh had been spoiling others: it would now

be spoiled. What she had meted out to others would now be meted back to her in largest measure. As numerous as had been her destroying armies, so numerous would be those that would destroy her. Xenophon, the brave leader of the Ten Thousand, encamped, about two hundred years after Nineveh's fall, upon her site: he found the whole plain of the Tigris covered with the mounds of the dead.

As we read Nahum's last words, we recall the prophecy of Jonah. In Jonah's experience there had been a healing of Nineveh's wound, at least for a time. It is not so now. Nahum beholds the day when silence shall reign in Sargon's palaces, and his power shall be no more. When God scatters, no man shall gather. No one shall lament over such a fall.

CHAPTER XI.

The Prophet Zephaniah (660-620 B.C.).

(Pp. 92-99.)

The reformation of Manasseh had been followed by the brief, but idolatrous government of Amon. Nahum, who had been Jehovah's living witness during Manasseh's reign, was succeeded by the prophet Zephaniah, who steps into Nahum's place, and continues to declare God's will, until one of the greatest of the prophets appeared in the person of Jeremiah. The dark days of Amon's reign, and the period of Josiah's minority, when as yet there was no indication of the earnest efforts so soon to be made to purify the national religion, were the time when Zephaniah prophesied. His opening words shew with what alarm and sadness he viewed the existing condition of things in

Jerusalem. Not yet had Nineveh fallen, but great movements were creating excitement in every direction. A warlike race had appeared in the North, filling all with terror. These Scythians were now threatening Nineveh and the South. About this time they were hanging on the very borders of Palestine, ready at any moment to empty their wrath upon the Holy Land. But meanwhile they were held back by an over-ruling Providence, which would accomplish God's work by other instruments. The Median kingdom had been established during Hezekiah's reign, with its capital in Ecbatana. Cyaxares, whose daughter married Nebuchadrezzar, the great king of Babylon, was reigning now over the Medes, and by securing the treacherous massacre of the Scythian leaders at a banquet (so the story runs), put an end to all danger from that quarter; for without leaders these wild tribes were helpless. Nineveh, however, had been much weakened by their attacks, and thus made an easier prey to Babylon, Media's successor as a world-power. With such commotions convulsing the nations in full view of Zephaniah, we can understand the opening words of his prophecy: "I am utterly consuming all things from off the earth, saith the Lord." Then were wars, and rumours of wars, on every hand.

About the person and birth-place of Zephaniah, nothing is known for certain. With some show of reason he is supposed to be of royal descent, and most probably Jerusalem was alike the place of his birth, and the sphere of his ministry. It would be very interesting, if we could think of our prophet as a lineal descendant of Hezekiah, Isaiah's pupil, and Judah's great reforming monarch; but the evidence will not allow of the identification of the Hezekiah named in our text with this king. There are two difficulties.

There is not sufficient time for the four generations here referred to, and Hezekiah is not described as king of Judah, which title he would most certainly have received had he been so.

We have said that Zephaniah delivered at least the earlier portion of his prophecy before Josiah's eighteenth year came—that year of true reform. Among the causes largely contributing to this reform would be Zephaniah's solemn words of warning. He probably died before he saw all, that the good king Josiah proposed, carried out. A brief interregnum in the succession between Zephaniah and Jeremiah is filled up by Huldah, the prophetess. Habakkuk, however, flourished about this time too; so that we can draw no conclusion as to whether Zephaniah was alive or not, from the circumstance that Huldah delivered God's message to King Josiah. God's servants, however, often sow in tears; they seldom see the fruits of faithful and sustained labours. What is certain is, that Zephaniah's labours were very soon crowned with success. Not many were the days, before their fruit was gathered.

His message was one of solemn warning addressed to Jerusalem, and necessitated by Amon's return to the idolatries of Manasseh. These are plainly indicated in the terms, "remnant of Baal" worshippers, and Chemarim, or idolatrous, black-robed priests. In Jerusalem, alas! were found those that worshipped the host of heaven, who cultivated the cruel rites of Moloch, and had ceased to inquire of Jehovah. Hence a day of terrible judgment must come! Man dare not say a single word to stay its approach. He must hold his peace before the Lord God! This judgment day is called a sacrifice. It is to be no respecter of persons: all classes, from the prince of the

Royal House down to the poorest tradesmen, are to suffer, for all alike have sinned. The prophet is confronted with men, who disbelieve in God's moral purpose, who think of God as one afar off, who concerns Himself not at all in human affairs. How differently they think of God from what they should think! To the prophet, God is One who makes for righteousness—One who must search thoroughly and remove completely whatever interferes therewith. The intense earnestness of the prophet appears strikingly over against the callous indifferentism of men settled on their lees. We are reminded of Isaiah's descriptions of the Day of the Lord as we read his burning words. In that day, nothing that man has can avail for deliverance. But as that judgment has not yet come, an opportunity is afforded for repentance. Oh! that Jerusalem might be wise in time, for she is reminded that all these opportunities of grace pass away so quickly, even as chaff before the wind! Even yet men could seek the Lord; even at this eleventh hour, and on the very eve of judgment, they could seek righteousness, and so be hidden when the decree is brought into execution.

The prophet then looks around — from Jerusalem as his centre—and traces the progress of the Divine judgment on surrounding heathen peoples. He has something to say to the Philistines, to Moab, and Ammon, to Ethiopia and Assyria; while, finally, he closes by some words of earnest warning addressed to Jerusalem. The towns of the Philistines would soon cease to be a source of trouble to Judah. As armed hosts after armed hosts from the North invaded Egypt, the Plain of Philistia suffered more and more. The fortified towns were destroyed, and the people of Jerusalem would soon pasture their flocks in their ruins without fear

of disturbance. Moab and Ammon had, like Philistia, been troublesome neighbours to the Jews. They had reproached God's people, and marched across the Jordan with destroying forces. The great army that had alarmed Jerusalem, in the days of Jehoshaphat, had been gathered chiefly from these two tribes, "And now, behold," cried the king, "the Children of Ammon, and Moab, and Mount Seir come to cast us out of Thy possession, which Thou hast given us to inherit" (2 Chron. xx. 10). In Psalm lxxxiii. the hostile attitude of Moab is described. "They have said, Come, and let us cut them off from being a nation, that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance. For they have consulted together with one consent: they are confederate against Thee! The tabernacles of Edom and the Ishmaelites: of Moab and the Hagarenes: Gebal and Ammon and Amalek: the Philistines with the inhabitants of Tyre; Assur also is joined with them: they have holpen the Children of Lot." As had been foretold by Isaiah, all the glory of Moab was speedily to be despised. Jehovah's power was to be signally manifested, that so all nations might stand in awe of His great Name. The prophets declared to all nations the certainty of judgment; and they clearly showed that if they only abandoned idolatry, and worshipped Jehovah, their trouble would end. But this demand was too much for them; hence Moab was to be as Sodom, and Ammon as Gomorrah! Zephaniah takes up Nahum's prophecy against Nineveh, and strikingly joins with Nineveh distant Ethiopia. Mark the sweep of the arm of the Lord as He stretcheth out His hand from North to South! He sees the complete overthrow of proud Nineveh; He hears the birds singing in the deserted palaces!

In full view of all these judgments upon her neighbours,

the prophet urges Jerusalem to give up her tendencies towards rebellion against the living God. Her chief sin—the *fons et origo* of all sin in every age—is simply a refusal to obey the Voice of God, a continual misuse of Divine discipline. Princes, judges, prophets, priests—all had gone out of the way, simply by refusing to hear what God had to say unto them. Attention is directed to what God was doing, and hope is expressed that to avert judgment Jerusalem might receive correction. But vain is this hope, so far as Zephaniah could see. Hence the Divine work of purifying and disciplining a rebellious people must be done by the fires of judgment. God's anger must be so manifestly poured out, that men may understand the righteous requirement of His law, and no more trifle with His grace. After the storm will come the genial calm: after hottest war, the abiding peace. A purified life, and worship with true consent will come only when men have been broken down by chastisement: the peaceable fruits of righteousness will then appear on the soil of chastened souls. The prophet foretells the return of a dispersed people, even from the distant limits of their captivity in Ethiopia. Of such a return of Jewish captives the 68th Psalm also speaks. "Princes shall come out of Egypt: Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." For the primary meaning of such words is that God's scattered and chastised people shall be restored; while the secondary meaning reveals the influence such a manifestation of Jehovah's power would have upon the heathen nations among whom they had sojourned. Isaiah speaks of the homage, that would be paid by Egypt, and other nations to Jehovah, in Jerusalem (xviii. 7). When in this way God shall have purified His people, and so signally delivered them as to

impress the heathen nations, Judah shall no more remember her transgression; it shall be cancelled, and a new condition of things shall prevail, in which pride and idle boasting against Jehovah shall no more be seen. A humble people shall worship in Zion, God's holy mountain: a ransomed people shall be all righteous. They shall be like unto a flock of sheep lying down in safety.

As this vision of a coming day fills the prophet's mind, he calls on Zion to express her grateful joy. All punishment shall then have ceased; and God, alone honoured in the midst, will be a certain guarantee against the recurrence of dire calamity. A holy confidence shall be shown in Jehovah, while He in turn rests in His love. Those, who once mourned as they were deprived of religious privileges, shall now be fully satisfied; those who had been reproached as a God-forsaken people shall now receive praise and fame in every land, as the heathen recognise that in a little wrath God had hid His face from them for a moment—for a small moment had He forsaken them, but with great mercies had He gathered them.

CHAPTER XII.

The Prophecy of Habakkuk (610-600 B.C.).

(Pp. 99-106.)

Zephaniah was succeeded by the great prophet Jeremiah, whose life-work and prophecies form the third part of this series. The ministry of this distinguished man was long and important; for, beginning in the bright and hopeful days of Josiah's reform, it continued, through many vicissitudes, to the dread catastrophe of the fall of Jerusalem, and ended

among the captives in Egypt. Josiah's tragic death at Megiddo, about 610 B.C., was a crisis in Jerusalem. Many of Jeremiah's brightest hopes were then dashed to the ground, and a king began to reign from whom he received no favour. Dark days were once more the experience of Judah, and the clouds of judgment loomed only too near and too heavy on the horizon. About this time the prophet Habakkuk voiced the prevailing perplexity, and looked out with anxious eye from his watch-tower. That this was his date may be gathered from the distinct mention of the Chaldæan power as the instrument of Divine vengeance. Jeremiah does not make any reference to this power in his earlier prophecies. The terrible judgment, that was ready to descend from the North, and which was manifestly stayed by God's hand during Josiah's reign, was that of Scythian invasion. But, as we have seen, all fear of trouble from this quarter had been removed; and when Josiah died, the Babylonian Empire was spreading itself in all directions, to take possession of dwelling places, that were not theirs. Jeremiah, in his prophecies to King Jehoiakim, *i.e.*, after 610 B.C., makes clear reference to the Chaldæans; and in the reign of his successor, Zedekiah, Nebuchadrezzar's name is mentioned. Some have thought that Habakkuk prophesied at an earlier period of gloom, as *e.g.*, in the reign of Manasseh; but we have already the prophetic ministry of Nahum at that time. While this striking account of the Chaldæans is of itself sufficient to indicate that Habakkuk found his opportunity to speak in God's great name, just when general alarm was being created by the possibility of a Babylonian invasion—just when the dark shadows of a terrible coming event were lengthening out over the land. How long Habakkuk prophesied we have no evidence to

determine; when or whence he came forth, where or when he died, we do not know. All we can do is to fix a point near to which he delivered his message. This we regard as 605 B.C., a few years after Josiah's death.

This period was a time of relaxed government. The prophet sees abounding iniquity; he is alarmed, and cries out to God. Why should such evil be allowed to continue under a Divine surveillance? Such a question has often been asked by God's people, for the power of wickedness to baffle the efforts of the righteous has often embarrassed faith. They have felt, like the psalmist, that their feet had almost gone—that their steps had well nigh slipped, as they have seen how men disregarded God, and despised His law (Ps. lxxiii.). But Habakkuk feels convinced that this sad condition of things at home can only be the prelude to some calamity from without; for internal sin always precedes external attack. He bids the people look abroad, and calmly mark the steady and remarkable growth of the Chaldæan power. He can't understand how they should be so callous, and indifferent to the claims of righteousness, when a mighty power is rising before their eyes—a power greater than Assyria, which had caused their forefathers so much suffering. Could they not see that from Babylon a terrible judgment might speedily come, if they did not repent, and recover the favour of God? A great military Empire, self-sufficient, with no regard for God, or man, with supreme contempt for every opposition, attended already with singular success—this is the Empire of Babylon as Habakkuk sees it. Though Babylon had for long been a great city, her influence had been curbed by Nineveh. In 625 B.C., some four years after Jeremiah's ministry had begun, and some fifteen years before Habakkuk's prophecy, Nabopolassar founded a powerful

dynasty, which raised Babylon to her highest pitch of glory. This steady advance Habakkuk saw, and drew timely attention to. But while Babylon was thus growing in greatness, the prophet saw already the evil principle at work, which would ultimately bring about her ruin. Her whole aim was self-aggrandisement: herself was her goal, and her god: all success being traced to her own resources, she worships herself alone: and thus success becomes her ruin. Brute force was incarnate in the Assyrian and Babylonian deities—that moral force, which is identified with righteousness and unselfishness, they ignored entirely in Nineveh and Babylon. Hence the retribution. The great battalion may sweep by, irresistible as the wind, but God can turn both alike at His supreme pleasure. Failure to recognise the Governor of the Universe is a nation's highest sin.

Habakkuk does full justice to the claims of Jehovah. He recognises Him as from everlasting, the Holy One, the Undying, the Ruler of all. He sees that God was using Babylon to punish the sins of His people; for a Sovereign God, who was at the same time a holy God, could not allow evil to continue in them, but must correct them in measure. And when the human heart complains that the employment of wicked men to chastise the people of God seems incongruous, and out of keeping, the prophet approaches God with man's anxious question, and receives a Divine answer, which he immediately declares. Shall the wicked, who regard not God, be allowed always to do as they will, to empty their net for their own gratification? This is the question, and though it originally concerned only the Babylonian Empire, the principle of its solution, as here set forth, concerns all peoples and all times. The answer is in the form of a vision, and the prophet must make it plain to

every one. The truths of God are not of an esoteric kind, for the initiated few; they are for all who will receive them.

In this particular case a principle of limitation is clearly taught. To Babylon, as to Assyria, God gave a fixed time. In this principle a solution of many difficult problems is found. What is the end of all human boasting? When we go into God's presence, then do we understand this end; hearts are calmed because we know that God will at a fixed time put a limit to every enemy of righteousness. Patience is therefore enjoined, and an unmurmuring recognition of the fact, that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

The contents of the Divine answer tell us about the character, conduct, and end of Babylon. This people are boastful, deceived by wine, and proud; they are not content with what they have, but, seized with the folly of the age, they are intent on building up a universal empire, including all nations and peoples. In contrast with the puffed up, arrogant, self-confident spirit of the Chaldæan, stands the spirit of the true child of God, always humble and trustful. What is really involved in his faith in God is a continual dependence on a covenant-keeping God; and thus there is a reciprocity of faithfulness—God faithful to His promise, man faithful unto God. For faith is more than belief: it is a belief translated into character and conduct. The look that saves is a being turned toward God: that which destroys is a self-centred life that denies God. "We are not," saith the apostolic writer, "of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews x. 39).

Five evil things in the character and conduct of Babylon are set forth, and denounced in as many woes. (1) There is rapacity, which brings its own retribution in itself: the

plundered ones soon becoming the plunderers. Riches soon take to themselves wings, and fly away! (2) Selfish gain in the same way only brings shame. Houses built out of unjust undertakings shall be uncomfortable dwellings; for conscience shall find a voice in stone and wood-work. (3) Similarly the building of cities by the removal of captive peoples is a vain method of perpetuating national glory. Fire shall consume them: vanity shall be marked upon them all; but God's glory shall abide. (4) The debauched habits of Babylon are next referred to. Immorality and drunken revels went hand in hand. In every age strong drink is the handmaid of vice, and those who are filled with wine cannot be filled with the Spirit of God. It carnalises men, and destroys their spiritual susceptibilities. Thus it fared with Babylon. (5) For men said their prayers to a piece of wood: gross idolatry prevailed among a people, who had put the knowledge of a spiritual God far away from them. The truth taught by adopting the interrogative form here is important, and as thus put it is very striking in its dramatic force. Can idols give any response? Verily no: there is but one Supreme Being upon whom all should wait in silence. He is in His Holy Temple. His Name is Jehovah.

The prophetic writing of Habakkuk closes with a psalm, which might with propriety have found its place in the Psalter. For the word here translated prayer is the equivalent of the word psalm (Psalm lxxii. 20): many of the Psalms have this title (xvii., lxxxvi., xc.). The glory and greatness of Jehovah awe and solemnise the prophet; and these he sets forth as actually present to his eye. What God had done in the former days of the Exodus—when His glory covered the wilderness—that the prophet sees again,

as God rules the world's history, and will again interpose for His people's deliverance. He is all-glorious—the fountain and hiding-place of glory; when He cometh forth, that glory is revealed. The language in which God's manifestations of Himself are here described corresponds to that in particular of the eighteenth psalm. For before Him we are told the earth shakes, and trembles; the foundations also of the hills, the everlasting hills, are moved and shaken when He is wroth. Most strikingly does the prophet thus set forth his conception of Jehovah as the supreme Lord of Nature, and all natural forces—a God who not once only, as in Israel's deliverance from Egypt, but continually, is asserting His supremacy in the movements of nature and history. Rivers in their floods, the winds in their raging tempests, the earth in its earthquakes, the heavenly bodies in their eclipses —these all attest the mighty power of One, who is behind them, and over all His works. Thunders and lightnings are a Divine artillery: the highest billows are at God's command. Yet such things move man: they all tend to make him bow in God's presence: they are all indications of what He can do. Hence the prophet urges himself to rest in patience, believing that when the temptation comes there will also come with it a way of escape, that he may be able to bear it. With faith and confidence in such a God, he can face poverty and privation: in earth's darkest moments he will have a joy and a strength in God, of which no misfortune can deprive him, and which shall make him more than Conqueror through God that loves him. His is no Stoic indifference to the calamities of time, but a Christian heroism, animated by acquiescence in a Father's purpose, and strengthened by a heaven-born energy. This psalm of holy confidence Habakkuk placed at the disposal of the

Temple service. It has often been the expression of burdened hearts, finding thus relief as they cast all their care upon God, knowing that He cared for them.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Second Burden of Zechariah (600-590 B.C.).

(Pp. 106-111.)

The contents of this burden refer entirely to the condition of Judah and Jerusalem at a time subsequent to the captivity of the Ten Tribes and the overthrow of Samaria. The prophet has in view a great day of judgment, such a day of the Lord as Isaiah spoke of in his earlier prophecies before the reforming era of Hezekiah—such a day of the Lord, as is frequently the burden of the prophets, when doom is coming near. But there is a double attitude towards this coming judgment. At first a more hopeful spirit prevails as the prophet thinks of the possibility of deliverance, if only there were repentance, and confidence in Jehovah, but, as he sees a spirit of opposition to God manifesting itself, he is driven, like Jeremiah so soon after him, to speak only words of doom to his beloved land and people. This must have been a painful duty to patriot prophets, and only discharged under a sense of highest obligation. The use of the word "Israel" in the authorised translation may seem to militate against the view that this burden concerns only Jerusalem; but a comparison of Jeremiah xxiii. 6 with xxxiii. 16 will afford evidence of the interchange by scribes of these two words. This would easily enough occur when the final copy of the text was being made. Then the distinction of Israel and

Judah had ceased: captivity had amalgamated the Tribes, and one name, even Israel, was applied to the reunited people. We, therefore, read Jerusalem here.

The burden opens by telling of a terrible day of invasion as being near, even as Habakkuk declared about this very time. But Jerusalem is to cause amazement to her invaders. This had already happened in Sennacherib's case: they had been made like men that were in a dream (Isa. xxix. 7). But there is a difficult passage here to understand; for it seems that there was at this time a danger of the provinces of Judah making common part with the invaders in the siege of their own capital (verse 14 from Ch. xiv. here comes in naturally). This danger may have been brought about either by the undue centralisation of power in Jerusalem, attended by an utter disregard of the people's wants as a whole, or by the force of the invader, and a hope of saving their own harvests, and sharing in the spoil of the capital—either the one or the other; perhaps both may have had something to do with this unhappy possibility. Hence the prophet has, first of all, to warn Judah against the folly of a course so unwise, as he bids them remember what happened when the Assyrian fled. Not yet was the City of David to fall before the Babylonian invader; and thus Judah is led to unite her fortunes with her own capital, saying, "The inhabitants of Jerusalem are our strength, through the Lord of Hosts, their God." When the Babylonian would be smitten with amazement at the very gate of the city, Judah's tents would first be saved, and all estrangement between capital and provinces end. The government of Jehoiakim, a very differently minded sovereign from the good king Josiah, whom all classes had so lately mourned over on Megiddo's

fatal field (610 B.C.), was doubtless regardless of the provinces. Thus our prophet found his best endeavours required to restore good relations at this time.

The bright, hopeful words, "In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem," remind us of Isaiah's words to Hezekiah. The early years of the seventh century, with that of Josiah's reformation and zeal for the law of Jehovah, were years of hopefulness; but, alas! they soon passed away.

The Babylonian power was now consolidated, and the Scythian tribes, that had played an uncertain part in politics, disappeared as suddenly as they had come upon the scene. The prophetic testimony was disregarded in Jerusalem, and the city, which had been spared yet awhile in Hezekiah's time, was allowed to fall in Zedekiah's reign. More than a century of opportunity had run its course, and without being fully or wisely utilized. In this period Josiah's earnest endeavours, and Jeremiah's faithful ministry fell, but these availed not to avert the coming ruin. Our prophet has full in his remembrance, even as a recent impressive event, that great national mourning of all classes, high and low, prophet, priest, and people, when their good and noble king fell on the field of Hadad-rimmon,—a mourning that began there, and culminated in Jerusalem (2 Kings xxiii. 30).

The terrible day of judgment now foretold as speedily to fall on David's royal city, even the sack of it by Nebuchadrezzar, is described in the passages before us most graphically, and with striking imagery. First of all it is compared to a time of terrible panic, even like unto the panic in the days of Uzziah, when the great earthquake occurred. Again, as then, the mountains shall seem to cleave in twain. Some terrible landslip shall block up the valley. The Mount of

Olives, which seemed to block up the way of escape from the city, would part, and thus a way of speedy escape would be brought nigh to their very doors. But yet the city would be taken, and the people driven out. Then, again, this terrible day of visitation is to be accompanied by fearful signs in heaven above. There is to be an eclipse, and a general darkening of the heavenly bodies. The awful power of God is to be seen, even as at Sinai, where once He was supposed to dwell, and whence He came forth in dreadful majesty, shining from Paran, accompanied by His army of angels, as Habakkuk described it, when from His right Hand streamed forth the fire (Exod. xxxiii. 2). But at eventide there shall be light: a day of darkness, and a night of light. Thus would the day of the Lord be a day of clouds and thick darkness, a day of judgment, such a day as is the necessary preliminary to, and in the prophetic mind accompaniment of, any great work of individual or national regeneration (Joel iii. 14, p. 122; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Zephan. i. 15, p. 94).

Such a day was that of Calvary; such a day is that of a soul's agony as it passes out of the kingdom of darkness into God's marvellous light. Such times God shortens for the sake of His people (Matthew xxiv. 22; Jeremiah xxx. 7).

Peace comes after storm, and the beauty and growth of spring after winter. So after this terrible day, when God shall have vindicated His name, and magnified His law, there shall come times of great and extensive blessing. Those, who have refused to recognise Jehovah shall no longer do so; from Jerusalem, now the throne and dwelling place of the Most High, and the centre of the Divine Kingdom, there shall flow rivers of living waters east and west continually. A purified city might yet become a centre of perennial

blessing, the streams from which might flow, as from a lofty height, over the whole land; so the prophet hoped and prayed. Such a vision, Ezekiel, perhaps with this prophecy before him, had for his restored city; such a vision the Seer of Patmos had for "the new heaven, and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." There is in our prophecy the idea dear to Isaiah, Micah, and the earlier prophets, of Jerusalem being the religious centre of the world—an idea largely modified as time rolled on, and only finding realisation in a much more spiritual sense, than was at first thought of, for "salvation is of the Jews." Not as a city to become yet the religious metropolis of the world do we think of Jerusalem now; but as the point from which a religion so universal as Christianity has already sprung.

Alongside of the blessedness of residence in or allegiance to Jerusalem, there would be the pain and suffering of estrangement from, or opposition to, that city. Those that fought against her shall suffer many plagues. All who are wise will recognise Jehovah, and go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the great feast of Tabernacles—that feast associated with the glories of the Exodus. Then, in the new present, which will remind them continually of that old past, the people will have all their sins forgiven, and be washed from all ceremonial defilement. In the sad days between, they had pierced the prophets of God, and thus reproached Jehovah's great Name. Isaiah had been sawn asunder, Jeremiah had been put in a dungeon, and Urijah had been slain. For all this the people should now mourn, as God would pour out His Spirit upon them. His gracious favour would bring them in a grace-seeking spirit to His footstool. The day of national restoration would be a day of national mourning. Idolatry would then be swept out of the land.

There would no more be false prophets; nay, there would even be a revulsion against the prophetic office, caused by the abuse of it in the later days of Jerusalem. Then Jeremiah was continually called upon to condemn the false prophets. When the popular verdict would coincide with this, then any marks upon the breast, between the arms, which might be regarded as indicative of prophetic office would be at once accounted for in a more simple way. These marks, having no connection whatever with any religious rites, would recall the brawls of a man's former life and experiences. Thus, instead of men eagerly coveting the prophet's office, they would, on the contrary, disclaim all connection therewith.

In this day of restoration and repentance there would be a very keen sense of the dishonour done to God, in the person of His representatives, the prophets. They had been pierced, and He through them. He, Israel's true king, had been pierced, when the words of His messengers had been spurned, and their bodies pierced. In this way we understand the alternative readings of our text. The close identification of Jehovah with His people is taught in the Old Testament: this doctrine finds sublimest expression in Isaiah, Ch. liii., and highest embodiment in Christ, God with us. His words are, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My disciples, ye have done it unto Me."

CHAPTER XIV.

The Prophecy of Obadiah (About 587 B.C.).

(Pp. 111-114.)

Not the slightest indication is afforded whereby we may determine the family and birthplace of Obadiah. His name tells us, what his message also conveys, that he was Jehovah's servant. He saw clearly the fulfilment of the Divine purpose against Edom, that most bitter and remorseless enemy of Jerusalem. Edom's opportunity to rejoice over Jerusalem had now apparently come, and she was not slow to avail herself of such a time to heap insult and injury on her fallen foe. The city of David had now passed through the terrible ordeal of suffering, which the prophets had been constrained to foretell would certainly come, if disobedience to the Voice Divine continued. Micah's words were fulfilled: Jeremiah's terrible doom had come. And as Zion fell, Edom rejoiced. No wonder that the psalmist of the restoration felt himself compelled to cry out, "Remember, O Lord, the Children of Edom in the day of Jerusalem, who said, Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation thereof" (Psalm cxxxvii.). When Zion was in her deepest sorrow, Edom is gathering her forces together to go up against her in battle. This the prophet hears, and he is bidden to proclaim severest judgments upon a people so cruel and unkind. Obadiah's words are quoted by Jeremiah in his prophecies against the heathen nations: and thus we are led to think of these two prophets as contemporary. Obadiah has but one concern, even with Edom, while Jeremiah has a comprehensive mission. Edom is distinctly told what her fate is to be, and the reason of it:

she is to be greatly despised. Her pride had been occasioned by her mountain fortresses, in which she had put a false confidence. That pride came before her fall. The alliances of Edom were deceptive things: she received no support from them in the time of need. Her men of wisdom should also fail her. Her sin against Jacob—her long-continued ill-will against Jerusalem so often manifested, and now seen in its culmination of hatred—this sin was now bringing its necessary retribution. The prophet sees in this, Edom's latest action, the fruit of her history. Nothing else was to be expected: nothing else came. The seed sown, and carefully tended, was now a waving harvest. Instead of sympathy with a brother in distress, there is nothing but rejoicing in his misfortunes, and the prophet points out, in a series of stirring verses, what Edom did—what she should certainly not have done. How much she could have done to alleviate the suffering of Jerusalem's people, and yet she only increased their sorrows! This, however, is all known to the Lord; and just as the prophet's words of doom had been fulfilled in Jerusalem's case, so certainly would they be fulfilled in that of Edom too. Here the prophetic principle of a similarity of punishment and sin is dwelt upon. How continually the prophets teach us, what all history confirms, that the actions of an individual, or a nation, are the seeds of future woe or weal. "Whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap." "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." In the Divine government there is nothing arbitrary, or exceptional: one law, even the law of righteousness, is supreme. "As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee." This principle Obadiah emphasises. This principle found fullest illustration in Edom's history.

In Isaiah's earlier oracle Edom is not as yet told what her fate is to be; but this was given in a later one, and she could gather clear indications of God's purpose from other prophetic utterances. Her alarmed anxiety, her perplexity in Isaiah's time, might have shown how unsatisfactory was her condition. Joel has said (though we need not in this find an indication of his earlier date), "Edom shall be a desolate wilderness" (iii. 19). Amos, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, all these have no uncertain sound in what they have to say concerning this country. About the issue there could be no manner of doubt. This issue is clearly shown in the words of the second Isaiah. For in the sixty-third chapter of that work we have a full description given of the complete conquest of Edom and her capital. All that Obadiah had foretold then came to pass. The prophet hears of the overthrow of Bozrah. He sees Jehovah returning victorious from this His signal manifestation of vengeance upon Israel's typical foe. The day of vengeance, which was a prelude to the year of the redeemed, had come: Edom was brought down to the earth. Malachi saw in his time the mountains and the heritage of Esau laid waste for the dragons of the wilderness: he heard Edom complaining, "We are impoverished." Vain were their resolutions to return and rebuild the desolate places. The mouth of the Lord had declared that this land should for ever lie waste: it had become an habitation for dragons (Isaiah xxxiv. 1-17).

God's prophets always sing of judgment and of mercy. Hence this prophecy cannot end without a distinct promise of a coming day of brightness for Zion. Obadiah saw, with bodily eyes, a people scattered: with the eye of faith he sees a people restored and reunited. He grasps the meaning of the covenant: he knows that God would not

wholly cast off His people, but was, as Jeremiah said, chastising them only in measure, and not making a complete end of them, as He was the heathen nations. From the captivity in Babylon, both Ezekiel and Obadiah unite with what some regard as another anonymous prophet of the Exile (the author of Isaiah xxiv.-xxvii.) in foretelling a glorious return. The details of this prophecy of Obadiah need not trouble us; they seem to us only to set forth the important spiritual truth of restoration. The fulfilment of the prophecy is found in this great fact far rather than in any conformity to the details of the prophetic forecasting. The mind of the prophet, occupied with the future fact of a restored people, endeavours to fill up the picture: he shows us how Israel and Judah are again to repeople the land. We look back on a past fact, and we see in what actually happened all that God purposed to bring about. Let us ever disentangle essential spiritual truths from the details of their setting, and we shall see how all history is tending onwards to a grander fulfilment of his words, than ever could have dawned on Obadiah's mind—when all kingdoms shall belong to Jehovah.

CHAPTER XV.

The Prophecy of Joel (520-480 B.C.).

(Pp. 114-123.)

This prophecy has been variously dated. By some it has been regarded as one of the oldest: by others as belonging to the time of Ahaz, when idolatrous customs threatened the regularity of the Temple worship: but now more generally as being a Post-Exilic writing, urging men, in the spirit of

Haggai and Zechariah, to a more strenuous devotion to the work of Temple building. It occupies its place here because of this variety of opinion about it.

A very earnest and eloquent appeal is here made to Jerusalem. A loud call is addressed to those dwelling in Mount Zion. The centre of the prophet's ministry is thus defined. And though we can know nothing about the personality of Joel, the son of Pethuel, and have here only a voice crying in the wilderness, his date has been conjectured from internal evidence. The old enemies of Israel and Judah are not mentioned: Assyria has ceased to be, and Babylon is subdued. But there are enemies in the land: the work is hindered by the Samaritans; while also the governors of Persia are unwilling to give with regularity what is required for the Temple needs. And, besides, the country had suffered terribly from a great plague of locusts, an invasion so great that the prophet uses the strongest and most striking language about them. Nothing like it had happened within memory. As the earthquake in Uzziah's reign, and the dearth in Jeremiah's time (xiv.), so now this locust plague is regarded as a distinct indication of the Divine displeasure against Jerusalem; it is a loud-voiced warning. There is no need to think of an allegorical meaning in the reference to the locusts—either of Assyrian, Scythian, or Persian invasions, or of the inroads of Edomites and Phoenicians. Those who have been in the East will know, as we do, something about the sudden and awful havoc wrought by locusts; they are a very real plague. No wonder that Joel borrowed language from military expeditions to describe them!

Such a disaster, by affecting the agricultural produce, would of necessity interfere with the meal-offerings for the

Temple, and to this mainly, Joel attributes the cessation and diminishing of these. Not a green blade remained!

In such circumstances the prophet urges the calling of a great national fast—a convocation like that held in Josiah's time, like unto that which we have seen Zechariah foretelling. The institution of a solemn Fast, a custom which in these later days became strong, is now proposed; only thus could God's anger be further stayed. Priests, elders, all should seek His footstool in deepest penitence. Should they not obey, a more terrible day of the Lord would assuredly come. And how sad would this be, that a people so lately delivered from Babylon should again be punished! If only earnest prevailing prayer went up from every heart, then certainly God would not give over His heritage to reproach, or expose them to the mockery of the heathen. Ah! they had had enough of this! They remembered the sad day of Jerusalem, when the Children of Edom had looked upon the distress of Jacob.

The convocation is held. Prevailing prayer ascends. God is gracious unto His people. The plague ceases; once more there is a hope of glad harvest-homes, and of the Temple sharing fully in the first-fruits. But a difficulty here meets us in the use of the word "northern," to describe the locusts, as they came not from the North like the great invasions, but from the South-West. Hence this word may have something to tell us about the character of the locust plague, rather than about its geographical origin. The plague was sufficiently dreadful to be associated with something hostile, or awful, or diabolical,—something having an unknown or mysterious origin.

But now this awful scourge has vanished! Joy has succeeded sorrow. Judah realises that God has heard prayer,

that Jehovah is in their midst, as their protector. Those who trust in Him and do His works shall not be put to shame.

Just, however, as the day of plague was a foreboding clear and distinct of a time of heavier judgment, so the day of its departure becomes the promise and herald of a new era, an era of blessing. This happy time of conscious pardon, with the Divine favour resting upon those who are bringing forth fruits meet for repentance is to be indeed a latter-day glory, a period both of highest spiritual, and material prosperity. The bright hopes of the prophets would then be realised, if only faith and obedience should continue. Again the floors shall be full of wheat; again would the presses overflow with wine and oil! The losses inflicted by the locusts would be more than made up.

A two-fold manifestation of the Divine Power is promised. For God will show Himself both in spiritual gifts and in physical wonders. On all His people He will pour out His Spirit, and they will thus know and speak of His mind and will. Not one here and there, but all the Lord's people in every land will be prophets, for His Spirit will be poured out upon them all. This is the true ideal of the New Testament Church, when all exclusiveness and sacerdotal claims shall be swept away entirely. Hence, when the Spirit descended on the multitude at Pentecost, when so many were born in one day, and a new enthusiasm filled men's souls, Peter could turn round to the scoffers, who sought for some baser reason to explain these spiritual phenomena, and reply to them in the words of our prophet. Actually, then, men entered upon the new and fuller realisation of the dispensation of the Holy Ghost; and just as men reach forth unto their high calling in Christ Jesus, will they attain this

power of testimony through the reception of the Holy Spirit.

But, as in every time of spiritual movement, there are accompanying phenomena of a natural kind, in the heavens and on the earth. Men's minds fail them for fear. Eclipses and earthquakes attend the greater, and much more important upturnings of use and wonts, the spiritual throes of a new life. A regenerated and sanctified people, dwelling in Zion, will tell on an unbelieving world: many will be influenced by their testimony, while in the eyes of all unbelieving nations there will be a signal vindication of the Name of Jehovah. Once again the heathen will be compelled to acknowledge the Might of Jehovah, as they had been compelled to do in the days of Jehoshaphat. They will be constrained to restore the captives of the Tribes, for how few were those who had as yet returned to Jerusalem. Tyre, Zidon, and the Philistines, the great traders of the time, are graphically appealed to! They had bought and sold God's people: they had trafficked in what belonged to Jehovah. But all this cruelty and want of respect shown to the worshippers of God will only redound upon those, who had been guilty of it. There was nothing in common between them and God. They had completely failed to acknowledge the Divine claim, but the claim, however it may seem for a season not to be pressed, can never be finally foregone. Those who bought and sold would soon themselves be bought and sold. They had already received warning enough from Nebuchadrezzar, as the rod of the Lord's vengeance; but still worse things would soon follow. A complete dislocation of Phoenician supremacy ultimately came about: Tyrians and Zidonians were in turn sold to distant peoples.

This day of the approaching vindication of Jehovah, the prophet calls upon Zion to proclaim among the nations. What a warlike assembly He summons! Unlike Micah and Isaiah, who foretold a reign of peace, when swords should be turned into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks, Joel proclaims a time of conflict and judgment. Not that there is to be war alone; there is rather to be a time of decision and arbitrament. Men are to be gathered in their thousands to stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord. Thus the inhabitants of Jerusalem were to be convinced beyond a doubt of the presence of Jehovah in their midst, as "the hope of His people, and the strength of the Children of Israel." A true city of God would then become a reality.

And has not history been full of the fulfilments of such prophetic anticipations, in measure, more or less? There is no propriety in narrowing down such prophecies to any one given event, however grand. Nay, rather, we should look around and find ever new illustrations of God fulfilling Himself in many ways, and at sundry times. Sennacherib's defeat: Josiah's reformation: the overthrow of Nineveh and of Babylon—are not all these things signal illustrations of times of Divine judgment—Divine decision concerning men and nations, as from His judgment seat in Jerusalem? With such times nature seems to the prophetic eye in fullest sympathy; and words are now used by Joel, like those used by Amos, to describe the consequences of the vindication of God's great Name. The greatest blessings of a physical kind are only typical of highest spiritual blessings; these are all in richest measure to be enjoyed. The promised land was aforetime described as a land flowing with milk and honey: it is now described as filled with streams of new wine and milk. On every hand there are to be rivers of

waters. Jerusalem, as afterwards seen by Ezekiel, was to be the spring of a living water, that should fertilise the land, and quicken even the Dead Sea. Their enemies would cease. The two greatest and worst of these—the types of all others, even Egypt and Edom, are specially mentioned. Only let Jehovah be acknowledged as dwelling in Zion—as King supreme, and these blessings would follow. Only let God's will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven, then would come the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

DIVISION III.

CHAPTER I.

The Ruling Religious Conceptions of the Prophets.

Here, of course, we limit ourselves to a consideration of the prophets whose writings have already occupied our attention. Their historical position and the historical connections of their prophecies have been observed by us. It now remains for us to gather together, as briefly and as concisely as the importance of the subject allows, the ruling religious conceptions embodied in these prophetic documents. All such inductions are more or less coloured by the point of view adopted, and the general principle applied; they are, therefore, more or less imperfect. Still, in their measure, they are helpful, as showing the progressive development of revelation, and the essential harmony between its advancing stages.

The prophets were essentially men of the Spirit, but they were also men of their own Time. The views they were led to enunciate, under the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, were of necessity presented in forms suggested by their local circumstances and their time. Hence we must distinguish between the abiding and the transient elements, between the substance with its permanent signification, and the form with its temporary references. The true prophets had a divinely-given commission and authority; they spoke in God's Name. But alongside of these prophets were others

claiming also to be men of the Spirit, or inspired, and the opposition of these men was sometimes painful in the extreme. There are frequent indications of this state of things in the writings before us. Hence this question arises: What is the *criterion* of the canonicity or authority of a true prophet? What, *e.g.*, distinguished Jeremiah from the false prophets, whom he denounced? Our answer must be that this criterion is to be found in the harmony existing between the utterances of the prophets, and the supreme prophetic standard of Righteousness. The absolute righteousness of Jehovah, and His disregard of persons in His concern for the promotion of His righteous requirement — to this the true prophet bore testimony. Any prophetic voice which would reflect on Jehovah's righteousness, or show respect for persons, would be self-condemned.

This, then, stands out clearly in true prophets—a continual testimony to the righteous character of God. They conceive of a God who is supreme, and has a supreme requirement of a moral and spiritual kind from all peoples, whom He has made. Micah well states this, while Amos and Hosea judge the conduct of surrounding peoples in the light of the same moral law, by which they judge Israel and Judah. Prophetic condemnation is directed against moral delinquencies, and national wrong-doing, rather than against ceremonial defects. Hence in dealing with the relationship of Jehovah to Israel, they make this to consist not in certain religious rites, but in a spiritual appreciation of the Divine character, such as love, resulting in practical goodness in this life. Such a thing as absolute justice exists: to it all must bow, even the proudest empire, as well as the humblest individual. Thus moral indifferentism is severely con-

demned. The importance of a moral life as determining human lot is constantly dwelt on.

Religious worship must then essentially contain a moral and spiritual element. Individual consent, a pure lip, and a moral life must go alongside of it. All unspiritual worships, or worships attended by impure or immoral practices, are reprobated. The Canaanitish worship of Baal, and the king of Heaven (afterwards called Moloch), as containing so many sensual customs, and confusing natural and spiritual attributes, was soon declared to be diametrically opposed to the worship of Jehovah. The simple and primitive altars on every High place were denounced as surely tending to idolatry. A clear line of demarcation was drawn between the worship of Jehovah and every other worship. One central sanctuary began to be recognised as necessary to secure purity of worship. The pillar, ephod, and teraphim, with the asherah or pole, that marked the place of ancient worship, were all condemned. Even the outward ceremonial of sacrifice was discounted, in view of the danger of dependence on it. The absence of all this in the better days that followed the Exodus, those days of high devotion, is pointed out by Hosea. Pride or satisfaction with anything outward must end; for the true life, as Habakkuk reminds us, rests on moral integrity or faithfulness, man's response to God. The Old Testament idea of this essential element of the religious life makes us think of St James' practical faith that is shown by works. Hosea's mercy desired by God is goodness of conduct.

This God who would have all nations worship Him is thus a universal God, and no tribal deity. He is the God of creation and providence. He, who has made all things, provides for all His creatures, and rules over all. The

dew and the rain, the fruitful season and bounteous harvest, the light and the darkness, Pleiades and Orion, all obey Him. Even for the rebellious He provides, as Hosea touchingly tells us in his pleading with the idolaters of Israel to return. This God is also the God of revelation, who makes known His mind to His servants, who warns all by many events, and who answers prayer. Teraphim and idols are silent; they do not help. The folly of multiplying pilgrimages to sacred places, and consulting rods and sticks, is made manifest. This great Creator speaks in power, and works with might among all nations.

But as the prophets of Israel and Judah, they had, of course, a special interest in their own people. With their continued existence they identified the interests of religion: harm to this people could not but mean harm to Jehovah's cause. Called in Abraham, delivered under Moses, and placed in this land, their position had a distinct spiritual significance in relation to a pure worship. Their history was full of Divine interpositions. Great, therefore, was the prophetic hope as to what this people might do and enjoy, if only they would realise that Jehovah, the Holy One, was the God of Israel, and obey Him; for then He would dwell in their midst as their protector, and always victorious deliverer. This conception of Israel's position could not allow any temporising with sin, nor encourage any false reliance on the Divine favour as a guarantee of safety, when the Divine law was dishonoured. Nay, Israel is called to be a Holy people, a people in this sense for God's possession—to a higher obedience, because possessed of a higher knowledge.

Full and clear was the teaching of the prophets as to the Divine requirement: the abundance of revelation is

referred to in the emphatic expression about the ten thousand precepts of the law. They could enquire of the Lord both from priest and prophet; thus the Torah, or Divine requirement, was ever more fully made known until it reached the form, in which we now have it. It was the finished result of a continuous revelation.

The prophets, however, found it difficult to impress upon the people that privilege entailed responsibility: that failure in duty to God would infallibly lead to the forfeiture of privilege. For an obedient people highest blessings were promised, but for the disobedient only the Divine anger. Spiritual and material blessings together complete the ideal of what an obedient people should attain unto. At first all importance attached to the people and nation as a whole; only very much later, when national hopes were frustrated, and individuality became more recognised, were such blessings promised to persons.

God's kingdom being bound up in the prophetic consciousness with the continuance of this people, the views of the prophets were directed to the preservation of the nation, the glory of a Davidic king, and the purification of Jerusalem, as the centre of the world's religion. The disruption of the Tribes was a manifest evil; they protested against it being allowed to remain; they pled for reunion. Only under a reunited people could the glory of the Davidic House be restored, as Amos assures us. Allegiance to David, their king, is classed alongside of loyalty to God. Zechariah's symbol of the staff called "Bands" strikingly emphasises this. Israel's best days and most extended dominion had been, when they were one in allegiance to David, their king, and to God. All this must be again. Out of the old family of Ephratah, in Bethlehem, would

another David spring, first of all to curb the boastful Assyrian, and then to inaugurate and perpetuate a reign of righteousness and peace. Such a kingship as Micah, Zechariah, and Isaiah describe was at first regarded as an all-essential for the maintenance of Israel in their own land. Later times did not think so much about an individual king, as about a kingly people. The occupation of the land, promised to their fathers, was at the same time deemed essential. It was God's people's own heritage; their lot; every other land was unclean. Hence the people looked upon a forcible exile as an impossibility, as a violation of the Covenant. But when the Tribes refused to reunite, when Judah refused to obey God, then the prophets had to declare the necessity of judgment, even against Jerusalem and Mount Zion. God, however, must be victorious: the people with whom His cause was identified must be brought through the fire. A captivity must come, but the restoration of a purified remnant must follow. These would come back to their own land: these would be the new people of God, representative of the Twelve Tribes, and to them the promises would belong. Only a temporary hiding of God's Face would take place. It would be a day of the Lord. Jehovah must vindicate His righteousness. This all believed. But when the prophets declared not only that there would be a vindication of God in the punishment of the world-empires, and troublesome neighbours of Israel, but in the punishment of Jerusalem also, this was a hard saying. Such a proclamation made the true prophets unpopular, and led to men, who were the truest patriots, being regarded as the enemies of their own land. Yet they flinched not. For they believed in God. They knew He could do His own work;

they declared that He would pour out a spirit of penitence upon His people, and that in Jerusalem a fountain would be opened in the latter days for sin and defilement. Captivity would do good work. The people would be weaned from false trusts, so that, when restored, idolatry would cease, and the former days of innocence and simple manners would return. No foreigner should traffic in the Holy City.

Thus a limit would be put to the power and oppression of the enemy. Assyria and Egypt would pass away. What had happened in the Exodus would happen again. Supreme trust in Jehovah, as enjoined, would be found, and all the alliances with foreign people which were forbidden, would be things of the past.

But in the relation of Jew to Gentile another element is announced. To Jehovah the kingdom belonged. Hence the New Jerusalem would be the centre of a world-wide religion. All nations would be constrained to acknowledge Jehovah. In the valley of Jehoshaphat, even at Jerusalem, would all nations recognise Jehovah, and celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles. Upon every disobedient nation a terrible plague would fall. And when the possibility of Jehovah having a purpose of mercy for heathen nations was grasped by Jeremiah's time, we find in the writing of Jonah distinct expression of a truth so great in the sending of pardon to Nineveh. In the latter day, as Zechariah and Micah assure us, all nations will come up to Jerusalem to receive the Teaching of Jehovah. Thus salvation was to come to the world through the Jews.

The restored people would no more leave their own land, or go into captivity, so it was hoped. In the light of the great rejection of the Messiah we see how that hope

has not been realised. These, then, are essential elements in the teaching of the prophets. Israel and Judah would return from captivity, as they began to do when Cyrus signed his decree; Jerusalem would be the home of a reunited people, and the centre of a pure worship, in which idolatry should have no place. So it came about. But when the new Israel failed to advance to a higher life, they, too, perished. Laying aside the temporary and local elements in the prophecies under review, let us emphasise the abiding principles of the Divine government of the world, as the same in all ages. In the future there must be some feature corresponding to whatever has happened in the past. In every age God must have His chosen, covenanted, and holy people, under the rule of His Anointed One. The idea of a chosen nation has given place now to that of a church, a body composed of those who are called out of all nations; an earthly kingdom or theocratic state has given place to a spiritual kingdom, the kingdom of the saints of the Most High, not of this world, therefore not temporary or local, but everlasting and universal. There is now an abiding King, but to His rule there are no geographical boundaries. His dominions are coextensive with the universe; they are to be the new heaven and the new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Highest felicity on earth is to be theirs, who follow the laws of this King, and then in a future still more glorious all such shall abide with Him in the possession and enjoyment of an endless life.

CHAPTER II.

A Chronological Table.

B.C.	
937.	The establishment of the kingdom of the Ten Tribes.
891.	Omri founds his dynasty.
880.	Ahab, son of Omri, succeeds.
870 (*c*).	Jehoshaphat and Ahab in alliance.
854.	Battle of Karkar—Israel and Syria against Assyria.
850.	Carthage founded by Phœnician Colonists.
842.	Jehu, king of Israel, pays tribute to Assyria.
804-758.	Period of Jeroboam II. Jonah, the prophet, lives.
794-742.	Uzziah, regent and king, in Jerusalem.
742-700.	Period of I. Isaiah's ministry: also of Micah.
745.	Tiglath-Pileser, Emperor of Assyria.
738.	Menahem, king of Israel, pays tribute to Assyria.
732.	Fall of Damascus.
740-722.	Hosea, the prophet's period.
729-722.	Hoshea, last king of Israel.
726-698.	Regency and Reign of Hezekiah.
724-722.	Siege and Fall of Samaria.
711-710.	Capture of Ashdod, and invasion of Judah by Sargon.
701.	Battle of Eltekeh. Sennacherib's withdrawal.
698-643.	Dark days in Jerusalem. Manasseh, king.
676.	Manasseh pays tribute to Esar-haddon.
662.	Fall of Thebes, *i.e.*, No-Amon.
640-580.	Jeremiah's life and ministry.
621.	Josiah's reformation.
610.	Josiah's death at Megiddo.
607.	Fall of Nineveh.
599-597.	First Captivity of Jews.
588-586.	Destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel, prophet (592-570).
559.	End of Median Power, and rise of Persia.
539.	Conquest of Babylon by Cyrus.
516.	Second Temple finished. Zechariah and Haggai, prophets.
479.	Ezra's work.
445.	Nehemiah in charge.

CHAPTER III.

Glossary of Names and Notes.

(Arranged as they occur in the text.)

(Pp. 11-12.)

Amaziah was the father of the better known king Uzziah, who, at an early age, was raised to the regency by a popular movement. Uzziah had a long and prosperous reign. Dates cannot be absolutely fixed. Amaziah reigned twenty-nine years, and Uzziah fifty-two years. From about 810 to 742. In 758, on his father becoming a leper, Jotham became regent.

Israel, the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, with **Samaria** for their capital.

Jeroboam II. The fourth king of the House of Jehu, and the second of this name among the kings of Israel. A distinguished ruler: restored the boundaries of Israel. Spiritual elements lacking. Contemporary for many years with Uzziah.

Hamath, a town in the north of Palestine on the river Orontes. The entering in of Hamath was Israel's northern boundary—*i.e.*, the valley between the Lebanons. It was a strong town, centre of an important kingdom, taken in 850 by Shalmaneser I., and depopulated in 720 by Sargon. See in Isaiah x., a reference to towns conquered by Assyria. Also in Amos, p. 27.

Arabah, or the Valley of the Dead Sea, the southern limit of Israel. A great depression stretches from Mount Hermon to the Red Sea. The Sea of Galilee is 600 feet below level of sea, and the Dead Sea 1316 feet. The Wady of the Arabah is the channel of a mountain stream flowing from south-east into the Dead Sea. The Brook of the Willows (Arabim, Heb.) (Isaiah xv. 7) divided Moab, then subject to Jeroboam, from Edom. Deut. iii. 17 (R. V.).

Jonah (Dove), a prophet in Jeroboam II.'s time. About 750.

Gath-Hepher (Wine Press of the Well), in the Tribe of Zebulun, 2 miles from the modern Seffurieh. The birthplace of Jonah. Now El-Meshed.

Nineveh, the capital of the great Assyrian Empire, a large and extensive city on the river Tigris. Founded by Nimrod, or his sons. (See Genesis x. 11.) A cluster of towns covering a large area. Assyria, about 880, became a paramount power: conquered Syria: threatened Jerusalem during Isaiah's ministry: doomed by Isaiah and Nahum. Manasseh tributary to her about 676. Tiglath-Pileser, 745: Shalmaneser IV., 727: Sargon, 722: Sennacherib, 705: and Esar-haddon,

(Pp. 12-18.)

681, were Assyrian Emperors concerned in Jewish history. The decay of Nineveh was brought about by Scythian attacks, 620; and her fall took place about 607, when power passed into the hands of the Medes. There is no historical evidence of the mission of Jonah to Nineveh.

Tarshish, or Tartessus, an important trading centre in Andalusia, south-east of Spain. Tarsus, in Cilicia, to which Paul belonged, is a different place.

Joppa, the modern Jaffa: one of the oldest towns in the world: a harbour on the Philistine coast, about 36 miles west from Jerusalem. Assigned to Dan (Judges v. 17). Through this port the cedar, both for the first and second Temples, was carried: and with a railway connection, it will soon become a place of increased importance.

Amos, the herdsman prophet, who was the first to write his prophecy in a pure Hebrew style. He was specially commissioned, and did not belong to the prophetic guilds, called sons of the prophets. Lived about 780-740.

Tekoa (Shouting. Jer. vi. 1). A small town, built by Rehoboam, 6 miles south of Bethlehem. The home of Amos. See also 2 Sam. xiv. 2.

Uzziah, see above, p. 232.

Earthquake, dated by Josephus (Ant. ix. 10) as occurring in 758, the year of Uzziah's sin and punishment. So well known among his contemporaries as to afford Amos a date for his prophecy. He may have used this event as a warning, just as Joel used the locust plague, and Jeremiah the drought (Jer. xiv.). This earthquake is said to have been so very violent as to have divided a mountain in halves, and moved one half 4 furlongs or half a mile. Hence the reference of the prophecy of Zechariah, see p. 108.

High Places, early places of public worship in Palestine, on the top of hills outside the towns, and in part sanctioned for use in the service of Jehovah (Exodus xx. 24): at first not idolatrous, but when recognised as dangerous to the spiritual worship of Jehovah, condemned by the prophets, and finally desecrated by King Josiah, 620. They tended to take elements from local or Baal worship.

Carmel, a mountain on the coast near Acre, associated with Elijah's vindication of Jehovah. Etymologically—a fruitful place.

Damascus, the capital of Syria, the important kingdom lying between Israel and Assyria. On the river Abana, about 160 miles north-east from Jerusalem. Captured by David (2 Sam. viii. 5, 6): independent in Solomon's reign (1 Kings xi. 23). Carried on severe border wars with the frontier tribe of Gilead, when Ahab's death caused the Syrian alliance to end. Under the Benhadads, father and son, and Hazael, Israel suffered much at the hands of Syria (2 Kings xiii. 22). Hence Elisha's sorrow. Assyria, however, soon occupied Syria's attention, as

(Pp. 18-19.)

in 842, 839, 773, and finally captured Damascus in 732. See Zechariah, p. 62; also **Hadrach** in glossary. Damascus is now the seat of a Pasha in the Turkish Empire, and a flourishing town.

Restore. The implied meaning of the prophet is a revocation of punishment or restoration to prosperity, and though not mentioned, Assyria is plainly suggested as the rod of the Divine anger. This power was already causing trouble to Syria.

Gilead, extended from Bashan to the brook Jabbok, name both of district, and of several towns. The frontier land of Israel east of Jordan exposed to Syrian invasions, and also to attacks from the Ammonites (2 Kings xiii. 3).

Hazael, a Syrian captain, appointed by Elijah (1 Kings xix. 15) and Elisha (2 Kings viii. 7), to be king. His son was the third Benhadad (2 Kings xiii.).

Benhadad, *i.e.*, Son of Hadad. This name Hadad, found in Hadad-rimmon, is supposed to be a Syrian deity, but not identified. The Benhadads were kings of Syria, fought with Ahab and Asa: about 880.

Bikath-Aven, the pleasant valley in which Damascus is situated—Cœle-Syria or the Valley of Lebanon. Bikath = cleft or valley.

Eden, or Beth-Eden, translated Paradise: not identified, but most probably a place near Damascus, then well known as a royal pleasure resort: used here for the royal family.

Kir, in Armenia, so called from a river flowing into the Caspian Sea. The province of Georgia, part of the Assyrian Empire. Thither, the prophet indicates, the Syrians would be transported, as they had come thence. See p. 35 (2 Kings xvi. 9).

Gaza, or Aza, one of the five chief Philistine towns. The other four are Ashdod, Ashkelon, Ekron, and Gath. Gaza (see Gen. x. 19), a border town, and a place of importance in the eyes of the Assyrians as a key to Egypt. Consequently Gaza suffered much from these rival powers. A king of Egypt smote Gaza (Jer. xlvii. 1). The way to Gaza was desert in N.T. times (Acts viii. 26). The Philistines were constantly invading Judea (2 Chron. xxi. 16; xxvi. 6, 7). Uzziah took Gath. Joel (iii. 4) asks what Philistia had to do with God (p. 121).

Edom, a people descended from Esau, Jacob's brother. One of the four Hebrew families—Edom, Israel, Ammon, Moab. In hereditary feud with Israel. Occupied the district south-east of Dead Sea, separated from Moab on the north by the Brook of Willows (2 Kings viii. 20). The transportation of peoples, and the depopulation of towns was common in ancient warfare.

Tyre, an important maritime city in Phœnicia. In the reign of David a **brotherly covenant** existed between Hiram, king of Tyre, and himself (1 Kings vii. 13). Now Tyre was an enemy of Israel (Joel

(Pp. 19-23.)

iii. 4). Her commercial prosperity was immense. The great prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, follow Amos in declaring her fall. Assyria caused damage to her in 724, under Shalmaneser: Nebuchadrezzar in 572: Alexander in 332.

Teman, a dukedom or chief division in Edom. (Gen. xxxvi. 15). Teman was a son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau. (Gen. xxxvi. 4). The Eliphaz, who is represented among the friends of Job, is called a Temanite = Edomite (Job. i. 17).

Bozrah, chief town of Edom. See overthrow of Edom described (Isaiah lxiii. 1).

Ammon, with its chief town **Rabbah**: stretching from Syria to Moab: east of Gilead, and the Jordan. (Numbers xxi. 24; xxxi. 8-18). The border wars of Ammon and Gilead were cruel and constant. Rabbah had been taken by David's forces (2 Sam. xi. 1; xii. 26-29). Ammon then formed part of the Davidic kingdom (2 Sam. xvii. 27). Vengeance against the people for their cruelties is declared by Jeremiah (xlix. 2), and Ezekiel (xxi. 20; xxv. 5).

Moab, with its chief town **Kerioth** (plural of Kir, a city). Between Ammon and Edom, east of Dead Sea: with river Arnon for north boundary (Isa. xvi. 2). Part of David's dominions (2 Sam. viii. 2). Revolted from Israel on Ahab's death; as also set forth on the Moabite stone set up by Mesha, discovered in 1868, and now in the Louvre at Paris. Israel and Judah combined against Moab in Jehoshaphat's reign (2 Kings iii. 9). Their ingratitude is complained of (2 Chron. xx. 10). Moab was tributary to Jeroboam II.: hence no king now. A cruel act of Moab against Edom in burning the body of their king in lime is referred to by Amos: not otherwise mentioned. Nebuchadrezzar, in 583, secured the submission of the Ammonites and Moabites. Soon their very name was lost.

Lies = False gods (Jer. xvi. 19, 20).

Amorite, one of the Canaanitish tribes destroyed before Israel. Here used representatively for the nations driven out.

Nazarites, separated, or consecrated ones (Judges xvi. 17). Those bound by a life-long vow to abstain from strong drink, a growing Canaanitish temptation. An old order, standing alongside the sons of the prophets. These two orders lifted up a protest on behalf of God and temperance.

Two legs and an ear. May refer to the two tribes and a half across the Jordan. A remnant only saved from great danger.

Bethel, a town in Ephraim—one centre of Israelitish worship of the golden calves. Etymologically the House of God; called by the prophets Beth-aven, or the House of Iniquity, because of idolatrous practices. Jeroboam I. established an idolatrous altar here (1 Kings

(Pp. 23-27.)

xiii. 1). This was the **Sin of Samaria**: the sin that made Israel sin. Dan was the other centre (1 Kings xii. 29). By these sins Jehovah had been dishonoured: and the pressure of the Divine judgment is foretold.

Ivory houses (see p. 28). A sign of luxury. See Ahab's case (1 Kings xxii. 39). The kings had a **Summer House** or upper chamber of cooling (Judges iii. 20, R.V.), and a **Winter House** (Jer. xxxvi. 22).

Bashan, a fertile pasturage (Deut. xxxii. 14; Ps. xxii. 12; Ezek. xxxix. 18; Micah vii. 14). The well-fed cattle of Bashan here represent the luxurious ladies of Samaria, so self-indulgent.

Hooks, used by Assyrians for leading populations into captivity.

Rimmon, a false deity, worshipped in Syria (2 Kings v. 18). Probably worshipped by many in Samaria in Amos' time: these would cry in vain to this deity in their distress. The reference, however, is difficult. The text being corrupt, probably, we have no clue to the various readings. Some suggest the mountains of Armenia: others the Harem of the Syrian king: while the Revisers use the word **Harmon**, without helping us, unless they use it for Armenia.

Gilgal, probably a small town near Bethel (2 Kings ii. 2): a high place—its ruins are supposed to be found in Jiljulieh, a mud village in the plain of Sharon. To be distinguished from the Gilgal, 3 miles east from Jericho, where Joshua pitched his camp. Note the play upon the word Gilgal here. The Hebrew prophets cultivate such alliterations. Gilgal, the rolling one, shall roll away. Leaven forbidden (Exod. xxxiv. 25).

Beersheba, in south of Judah—extreme southern limit. An old sanctuary, like Bethel, Gilgal, Shechem, and Mizpeh (1 Sam. vii. 16).

House of Joseph. Israel, or the kingdom of the Ten Tribes, so called because **Ephraim** was the leading tribe, and he was Joseph's son (Gen. xlviii. 19). Israel = remnant of Joseph (p. 26).

Pleiades, an equivalent of Hebrew word for this constellation of seven stars in Taurus.

Orion, in the southern hemisphere, represented by the figure of a man with a sword.

Gate—place of judgment and commerce in east. In the gate = publicly or openly.

Siccuth, formerly identified with Hebrew word (Succoth) meaning a tent: now generally regarded as a Syrian name for Moloch, whose cruel worship was introduced even into Jerusalem.

Kiun = Saturn, a star-god. Called Raiphan or Remphan among the Egyptians. In Stephen's quotation from the LXX. (Acts vii. 43), the alteration by the Greek translators in Egypt of **Kaiwan** into **Raiphan** is seen. Not only the similarity of K (כ) and R (ר) in Hebrew,

(Pp. 27-35.)
but the Egyptian name would explain this. In Israel's best days a grateful remembrance of Jehovah's goodness, and devotion to Him, rendered sacrifices unnecessary: now He is forgotten, and Star worship, with splendid ritual, prevails. That worship they would soon bitterly regret

Calneh, or Calno (Gen. x. 16; Isa. x. 9) = Zerghish or Ctesiphon on the Tigris, south of Babylon. Though a strong town, captured by Assyria.

Hamath, see above, p. 232.

David. This early reference to David as a musician is important.

Burner, or Embalmer, as in other readings. Burial was the Jewish mode of disposing of the dead.

Wady, p. 232.

Prophet. In Israel there was a distinct order of men called prophets, or the sons of the prophets (2 Kings iv. 38)—they were a recognised guild. Amos did not belong to it. He was specially called. **Nabhi**, the Hebrew for prophet, perhaps means a chief speaker or proclaimer —a teller forth, rather than a fore-teller, and this is the true function of a prophet.

Polluted, because foreign.

Gath, see above: captured by Uzziah (2 Chron. xxvi. 6).

"Sin of Samaria," and **"Way of Beersheba,"** forms of common adjuration, with reference to the idolatrous customs rampant in these places (2 Kings xiii. 6).

Dan, where a golden calf was worshipped. Sacred fountains were at Dan and Beersheba.

Sheol = the underworld, or world of departed spirits: etymologically a hollow place—an abyss, hence hell in its original meaning. In Ps. cxxxix. 8, hell simply means the grave, or underworld. So in the Creed: "He descended into hell."

Caphtor, referred to in Gen. x. 14, Deut. ii. 23, and Jer. xlvii. 4, as origin of the Philistines, who are called Caphtorim. Casluhim, in Gen. x. 14, means immigrants, and probably the Philistines came from Crete, which is to be identified with Caphtor. The prophet reminds us that the migrations of peoples are under the Divine control. "God hath determined the bounds of their habitations" (Acts xvii. 26).

Edom, see above, p. 234. This country was at one time under the sceptre of David, and thus called by Jehovah's name. The prophetic idea was the restoration of the Davidic Kingdom, with all the glory of the Davidic era. The LXX., quoted in Acts xv. 16, read Adam for Edom, by a small variation in the vowel points, and construed the sentence differently.

Zechariah, short-lived king of Judah. Jeroboam, Zechariah, and

(Pp. 36-41.)
Shallum, three shepherds of Israel, were all cut off in a brief space of time. See p. 67.

Samaria became the capital of Israel after Tirzah and Shechem.

Azariah, or Uzziah, regent and king in Judah, 810-742.

Shallum, a military chieftain, who dethroned Zechariah in 758, and held the sceptre for one month.

Ibleam, translated "before the people" in A.V., but properly a small town in Galilee north of Samaria. The various readings gave rise to a conjecture, now rejected, that this might be the name of another usurper.

Menahem began to reign about 758 : continued in name king till 738, when he paid tribute to Assyria. Pekah, however, must have refused his authority, and ruled as his rival.

Tirzah (pleasant), the older capital of Israel about 6 miles east from Samaria, which became the capital when Omri began to reign (1 Kings xvi. 15).

Tiphsah (or Tappuah, Josh. xvii. 7), a place 6 miles south-west from Shechem — different from Tiphsah (Thapsacus), on the Euphrates (1 Kings iv. 24).

Pul = Tiglath-Pileser, king of Assyria, 745-727. A Babylonian name.

Shalmaneser, IV., king of Assyria, 727-722.

So = Shabak, a king of Egypt, about 726. Pharaoh (Per-ao) = Great House, is the official title of Egyptian kings.

Asherah. (1) A goddess = Ashtoreth. (2) The pole which marked the place of her worship. Not a grove. Plur.—Asherim.

Ava and **Cuthah**, two of the many towns of Babylonia, from which Colonists were brought.

Hosea, same Hebrew word as Hoshea, or Osea, shortened from Jehoshuah = Joshua, corresponds to Jesus in Greek (Heb. iv. 8). God's last prophet to Israel, and Israel's last king were so named. They were contemporaries (750-722). "Jehovah is salvation" : so the word means : so the prophet taught, but the king refused to believe.

Hezekiah, king in Jerusalem when Samaria fell. Regent with Ahaz, 726-722. Hosea, Micah, Isaiah adorned his period. If any of Hosea's prophecies were as late as Hezekiah, they must have been in his regency, just before Samaria's fall. The editorial heading of Hosea and Isaiah is the same. It chiefly concerns us to notice that it was in Jeroboam's days that Hosea appeared.

Jezreel has a double meaning—God scatters, and God sows. The Valley of Jezreel, or Esdraelon, associated with the tragic story of Naboth, and the consequent retribution that fell on Ahab's house (1 Kings xxi. ; 2 Kings vi. 32 ; ix. 25). Between Tabor and Gilboa.

Jehu, raised as the instrument of the Divine vindication against Ahab. Jezreel, where Jehu's house was sowed, would also be the scene of its

(Pp. 41-47.)

scattering. Jehu failed to appreciate the character and demands of Jehovah, 866-758.

Lo-ruhamah, unpitied. **Ruhamah,** pitied.

Lo-ammi, not My people. **Ammi,** My people.

Nose-ring. Common in Eastern lands (Gen. xxiv. 22 ; Ezek. xvi. 12).

Achor = trouble (Joshua vii. 24). A valley of trouble was to become a door of hope. This valley led up from Jericho to Ai and Bethel. With joy once before Israel had passed up this valley (Ps. lxxxiv. 7). Hosea dwells largely on the Exodus experiences.

Baal = lord, or master : the Canaanitish name for God : at first used by Israelites : now condemned by Hosea, as lacking a moral signification. Saul's son was called Ish-baal. When Baal became an obnoxious term, as associated with idolatry, this name became Ish-bosheth, the man of shame. The prophet dwelling upon the moral relationship of Jehovah to His people, proposed the name **Ishi,** or my Husband, for Baali, my master, or owner. The vowels of the Hebrew for shame were transferred to word for king, hence **Molech** (Isa. xxx. 33).

Pillar = menhir, a monumental memorial of a place with religious association, as at Bethel (Gen. xxviii. 18). Not condemned (Isa. xix. 19), but condemned (Deut. xvi. 22).

Teraphim, sacred symbols of some kind, associated, probably, with ancestor-worship : not necessarily idolatrous images (Zech. x. 2; Gen. xxxi. 19 ; Ezek. xxi. 21). Sacrifice, pillar, ephod, teraphim, here stand for a complete religious service. All would be absent in captivity. Both civil and religious institutions would cease. A civil restoration would also accompany a religious one.

Priest, the priestly race, with their mother, is here held to be in blame for the condition of Israel. For thy mother or stock, another reading is, with thee. Ch. iv. 4 is difficult without a change in vowel points.

Glory = Jehovah : while Baal worship is the worship of the **Shame** (Jer. ii. 11 ; Rom. i. 23).

Beth-aven, *i.e.*, Bethel, see above.

Mizpah, in Gilead, across the Jordan (Gen. xxxi. 38). **Tabor,** in centre of land. Both east and west were idolatrous practices prominent.

Gibeah, Ramah, Bethel, all towns in Ephraim. There warning notes are to be rung out (1 Sam. x. 26 ; Isa. x. 29 ; 1 Sam. vii. 17 ; 1 Kings xv. 21).

Benjamin, adjoining Ephraim, and therefore in danger of contamination. "After thee," or "The foe is upon thee." Some words may be lost.

Jareb = the combative, or contentious one : a descriptive word. There was no king of this name, so far as yet known. It has been thought to be one of the names of Sargon.

(Pp. 48-55.)

Goodness, *i.e.*, practical embodiment of mercy in acts—dutiful love shown in kindness.

There, an indication of the place where Hosea spoke, as he pointed with his finger to the idolatries of Israel.

Gilead, here = Ramoth-Gilead, a city of refuge, and a priestly town (Joshua xx. 7-9). Ahab's death here in battle. (1 Kings xxii. 37.)

Shechem, between Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, also a city of refuge. Hence the sadness of the prophet's reference. Rebuilt by Jeroboam I. (1 Kings xii. 25). 'By consent' is a translation of Shechem.

Their kings. This reference to the year of anarchy fixes the date of this portion of the prophecy. Zechariah and Shallum had fallen.

Egypt. Hoshea the king sought for an alliance with this country. Such alliances the prophets condemned. Egypt would yet punish those who trusted her.

Eagle. This may symbolically describe Assyria. The Eagle, or Vulture-headed deity, was there worshipped. It is a favourite military device. The movement of this fierce bird is compared to that of an army.

Cut. People cut themselves in Baal worship, &c. (see Jer. xvi. 6; 1 Kings xviii. 28); this was forbidden (Deut. xiv. 1).

Calves at Dan and Bethel. Their double yoke became a double sin: it made apostasy easy, and punishment severe.

Tribute paid by Menahem in 738 to the **King of Kings** as Assyrian, and other ancient kings, boastfully described themselves.

Noph = Memphis, an important town in Lower Egypt.

Gibeah, Saul's capital, Benjamin's stronghold. (See Jud. xx. 10; 1 Sam. xiv. 16). Once before idolatry at Gibeah was severely punished: yet it ever reappeared. Judges xix. xx. reveals awful sin.

Baal-peor, *i.e.*, Baal, worshipped at Peor as the owner thereof, in Midian. To this licentious worship Israel was seduced by Balaam (Numbers xxv. 1-9). An early indication of Israel's idolatrous tendencies. Barrenness was the result of this defection from purity.

Her King, *i.e.*, Hoshea, who was carried into Assyria.

Aven, *i.e.*, Bethel. There was one calf at Bethel (1 Kings xii. 28).

Shalman, probably Shalmaneser III. of Assyria, who, in 775, stormed Beth-arbel, a place near Pella, beyond the Jordan. But Shalman may be a Moabite king, and an event in the wars of Gilead may be referred to. There is also a Beth-arbel near Gennesareth. Certainly some recent, well-known, and sad event is spoken about.

My Son. So Moses spoke of Israel to Pharaoh (Exodus iv. 22). The Evangelist uses this as an illustration of an incident in Christ's life (Matt. ii. 15). In one case the reference is to a nation.

(Pp. 55-63.)

They, *i.e.*, the prophets of Jehovah. The Word of God a two-edged sword (Heb. iv. 12).

Admah and **Zeboim**, cities of the plain, destroyed along with Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. xix. 29).

West. Hosea declared a two-fold captivity as punishment for idolatry. From the West refers to Egypt. An understanding of the prophet's words depends on spiritual, not literal fulfilments. (Some would regard verses 10-11, p. 56 as post-Exilic.)

Jacob to blame as well as Esau (Gen. xxv. 26; xxviii. 13; xxxii. 24). Jacob resisted God: God wrestled with his rebellious spirit.

Canaanite or **Merchant** (Heb.). The people of Canaan were mercantile, while the Israelites were agricultural. In the growth of commercial pursuits, the prophet saw a departure from primitive simplicity, when Israel dwelt in tents, and among the cattle.

Prophet = Moses, who led the Exodus.

Sacrificers of men. Human sacrifice not uncommon among the heathen, as in rites of Moloch (Gen. xxii. 2; Judges xi. 39; 2 Sam. xxi. 6; 2 Kings iii. 27). Text difficult, however.

Horses, *i.e.*, those of Egypt. Dependence on Egypt as well as on Assyria is here disavowed (See Isa. xxx. 16; xxxi. 1-3). Multiplying of horses forbidden (Deut. xvii. 16).

Lily. (See Song of Sol. v. 13)—a large red flower. (Anemone coronaria.)

Oded. Probably a regular prophet. He appeared in Ahaz's reign.

Jericho, taken by Joshua (vi. 2), known as city of palm trees, south-east edge of the plain of Jordan.

Zechariah, a common name. Name of a slain prophet (2 Chron. xxiv. 20).

Hadrach, the name of a deity of Syria (Hadad or Hadar with ach as augmentative) (2 Kings xvii. 31). Hence of a district. This name occurs on the inscriptions, along with Damascus, as captured by Assyria (772).

Tyre = a stronghold. Mark the alliteration here. Assyria and Babylon both attacked Tyre.

Jebus, the old name for Jerusalem. Ekron shall be a captured city, even as Jebus was, and become an ally (Joshua xviii. 28; 2 Sam. v. 6; xxiv. 16).

River = Euphrates. Another Heb. word is used for the Nile (Amos viii. 8; Gen. xli. 1).

Covenant. That between God and Israel. The word for **blood**, and **also**, in Hebrew, very similar: the first consonant d like g (ד and ג).

Javan = Ionia, the Greek-speaking peoples of Asia Minor. The Ionians founded most important towns, *e.g.*, Miletus, Ephesus, &c.

(Pp. 63-75.)

Mentioned in Ezek. xxvii. 13. Here probably for West Asia generally, with which Tyre traded. Jews were sold to the Arabians and Egyptians: probably about this time to the Greeks also. See Joel. The passage in brackets is probably a later gloss.

Teraphim. See p. 239. Used in divination.

Gilead, so devastated, is again to be filled with people.

Assyria's proud empire ended in 607. This reference is clearly pre-Exilic. Persia humbled Egypt.

Thirty pieces, a slave's price, about £3, 15s. (Exodus xxi. 32).

Treasury, a simpler reading (Matt. xxvii. 9; Mark xii. 41). Two prophetic passages have been mixed up in St Matthew's quotation. This and Jeremiah xviii. 2. The reading, Potter's House, is taken from the LXX.

Micah, the prophet, born in **Moresheth** of Gath, a village in the Shephelah, or Low country of Judah—west of Jerusalem, near Gath, a Philistine town. The Shephelah lies between the central highlands of Judah and the maritime plain of Philistia.

Sin. The LXX., rendering of high places: the abstract for the concrete.

Gath. Note the alliteration here. Gath = Telling: Accho = weeping: Aphrah = dust: Shaphir = fair: Zaanan = coming forth: Beth-ezel = house of shelter: Maroth = bitterness: Lachish = horse-town: Moresheth = possession: Achzib = a disappointment or deception: Moreshah = inheritance: Adullam = a cave or lair. These places are all in the Low Country, and with them Micah was familiar. He sees, as Isaiah did, desolation passing from town to town (Isa. x. 28-31).

Spirit, breath, or wind. Prophets are called men of the spirit. In all ages, there are false prophets as well as true, *e.g.*, Balaam and Simon Magus. Contrast Micaiah, and Zedekiah the Son of Chenanah (1 Kings xxii. 11).

Tower of the flock or Migdal (tower) Edar (flock). In an agricultural country there would be many such. Here the reference is either (1) to a place near Bethlehem, where David was born, or (2) to a place near Jerusalem where David's power first showed itself.

Stronghold = Ophel, a fortified mound south-east of the Temple: a part of David's capital here stands for the whole. The prophet desires the restoration of the glories of the Davidic times—"the former kingdom."

Babylonia. Babylon in the text = Babylonian Empire. A reference to Assyria would have been more appropriate here. Probably, as in the prophets, the reference was not made definite, and a post-Exilic editor wrote a suggested reference on the margin, this afterwards passing into the text. Such a gloss was made after "former dominion"

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above. If it remains in the text, it may refer to an Assyrian captivity of Israel in Babylonia, part of Babylonia being under Assyria. The prophet foresees a time of trouble before deliverance should come.

Bethlehem-Ephratah, a double name, probably from a various reading—Bethlehem and Beth-Ephratah. Ephratah is the old name of Bethlehem (Gen. xxxv. 19; Ruth iv. 11; 1 Sam. xvii. 12). David was an Ephrathite, born in Bethlehem. As David sprang thence, another, even a great Davidic king, is promised, who would drive away the Assyrians. This Hezekiah did in measure.

Nimrod, founder or coloniser of Assyria (Gen. x. 11).

Pillars, see above, p. 239. In the later years of Micah, such pillars had become distinctly idolatrous, and are denounced by him.

Balak desired a curse upon Israel (Numb. xxiii. 7).

Shittim to Gilgal. That is, from the Plain of Moab to a place 3 miles west of the Jordan. From a scene of apostasy to a place in the land of promise—the way by which God led His people.

Omri was the father of Ahab, who introduced many idolatrous customs. Israel is described as the House of Omri on Assyrian Inscriptions (2 Kings iii. 14). Dynasty from 891 to 845 B.C.

Mountain. Boundary mountains north and south are thought of. Sea to sea—east and west boundaries. Mediterranean to Dead Sea and Indian Ocean. See Ps. lxxii. 8, for hoped for boundaries of the true kingdom.

Manasseh (698-643). He may have been regent from 698-693. He submitted to Esar-haddon (676 B.C.) of Assyria.

Valley of the Son of Hinnom, or Valley of Hinnom (*i.e.*, Gehenna). This Valley, being desecrated by the rites of Moloch, became afterwards a place for the refuse of Jerusalem, with perpetually burning fires, and never-dying worms. In the Tyropœian Valley, where it opens southwards.

Babylon. Asurbanipal crushed a revolt in Babylon, and was crowned there again at this time.

Gihon, or the Virgin's Spring, the chief source of water supply for early Jerusalem: to the south of the Temple in the Kidron Valley. Two artificial pools, on the west of the city, have wrongly received the names of the upper and lower Gihon.

Fish-Gate, near the tower of Hananeel on the north side. In eastern towns different occupations have their own quarter, and gates.

Amon (643-642). A brief reign.

Garden of Uzza = king's gardens to south of Temple.

Josiah, a good king, with an important reign, bearing on Jeremiah's ministry and prophecies, 642-610.

Nahum of Elkosh. Two places of this name are found, one in

(Pp. 86-100.)

Galilee; the other near Nineveh. Nahum, *i.e.*, comfort. Subsequent to 662.

Sennacherib. This king, defeated in 701, was killed by his own sons, 681, in the temple of his gods. His boastful embassy is spoken of (Isa. xxxvii. 10).

Decreed, *i.e.*, Huzzab. Once supposed to be the name of the Queen of Assyria, but no such reference is required. Nineveh is pictured as a queen shorn of her glory.

No-Amon, *i.e.*, Thebes, the magnificent capital of Patoris or Upper Egypt, overthrown by the Assyrian king, 662, as Noph, or Memphis (Menefer), the capital of Middle Egypt, had been in 680. Amon was translated populous in A.V.; but it is a sacred name applied to this city, after Amen, a deity.

Put or Phut, an African tribe on the borders of Egypt.

Lubim or Libyans, another African tribe in alliance with Thebes. (Ezek. xxx. 5, where Lud is used in R.V. for Lydia, and Put for Libya.)

Chemarim, used for the irregular and idolatrous priests put down by Josiah: black-robed (2 Chron. xxxiv. 5; Hosea x. 5).

Moloch, *i.e.*, king—probably = king of heaven or Saturn: as Baal is lord of nature. An eclectic worship condemned here. The consonants of the Hebrew for king are the same as in this word (see p. 239).

Maktesh, an industrial quarter, or bazaar, as in Eastern towns. In the upper part of the Tyropœian Valley, where Tyrian and Canaanite traded. The second quarter was really a second city, caused by the growth of the place (2 Kings xxii. 14; Nehemiah iii.).

Canaan, used for the native population, a mercantile people. (See above, p. 241.)

Cherethites, a Philistine tribe, supposed to have come from Crete (2 Sam. viii. 18; 1 Chron. xviii. 17).

Ethiopia, or Cush, to south of Egypt: combined under one king with Egypt, when Piankhi of the Ethiopian dynasty became Pharaoh, and crushed the petty kings of Lower Egypt. An account of this has been discovered.

Israel, here = Jerusalem. After the restoration Israel was the name of the whole people. In several passages a later editor naturally wrote Israel for Jerusalem. (See Jeremiah xxiii. 6).

Chaldæans, originally a small tribe on the Persian Gulf, masters of Babylon under Merodach, 720; under Nebuchadrezzar, 604, became a terrible power. This king reorganised them, re-established religious rites, and built magnificent buildings. (Hence his words, Dan. iv. 30.)

Themselves. They think themselves the source of all things. They

(Pp. 100-111.)

deify themselves. Asshur, name of town and deity. Thus Roman emperors.

East, not East wind. The word refers to direction rather than to character of conquest.

Shigionoth, plural of Shigaion, an irregular ode used for meditative pieces. A style or measure of poetry is thus indicated (see Ps. vii.).

Teman, a dukedom of Edom : see above.

Paran, a mountain range in the Wilderness of Arabia, north of Sinai (Gen. xxi. 12 ; Deut. xxxiii. 2). Here God once dwelt, men thought.

Jerusalem, a preferable reading (in xii. 1, p. 106) to Israel, see above. Nebuchadrezzar had withdrawn to check the Egyptians. Jeremiah declares that he would return (xxxiv.).

Judah, the provinces or country as distinct from the capital.

Beth-Ezel, probably a place near Jerusalem (Ezel = nearness). Micah (i. 11) speaks of a place so named.

Earthquake, see p. 233.

East sea = Dead Sea : the **West** sea = the Mediterranean, or Great Sea.

Geba to Rimmon, *i.e.*, from northern to southern boundary of Judah. Geba or Gibeah of Saul (2 Kings xxiii. 8). Rimmon, near Beersheba, on the border of Edom : site not definitely known.

Benjamin's Gate : **first** gate : **corner** gate : **Hananeel's** tower : the king's **wine-presses.** These places indicate the dimensions of the city as to be rebuilt under the new conditions. Jerusalem, as situated in the territory of Benjamin, had an important gate on the northern side so called (Jer. xxxi. 38 ; Neh. xii. 39). The wine-presses were on the south-east side : while Hananeel's and Meah's towers were on the north-east side. The boundaries from west to east, and north to south are thus drawn.

Feast of Tabernacles, distinctively associated with the Exodus deliverance by a grateful people ; hence mentioned in connection with the approaching era of national deliverance, which would be like unto a second Exodus.

Egypt : an enemy of Jerusalem, particularly about this time, 620-610.

Canaanite—*i.e.*, either a trafficker or an uncircumcised person (Isa. lvi. 7 ; Matt. xxi. 13).

Hadad-rimmon, in the Valley of **Megiddo.** Here Josiah, around whom many hopes gathered, was killed in battle, 610 (2 Kings xxiii. 29 ; 2 Chron. xxxv. 20). Ten miles south-west of Jezreel.

Shimei, grandson of Levi (Numb. iii. 17).

Nathan, not the prophet, but a son of David (2 Sam. v. 14). Shimei and Nathan representative of subordinate branches of chief families.

Edom, in which is the Mount of Esau and Teman (Lam. iv. 21.; Ps. cxxxvii.; Ezek. xxxv.).

(Pp. 114-123.)

Negeb—*i.e.*, the south country of Judah.

This host—*i.e.*, the whole united people of the Ten Tribes.

Zarephath, or Sarepta, 7 miles from Zidon, north border of Philistine coast.

Sepharad, some place of captivity, not certainly identified. (1) Spain; (2) Sardis; (3) Sepharvaim; (4) Euphrates; (5) Sheparda, near Babylon. (See Jer. xxxii. 44.) The alternative is Sardis, or some district in Babylonia: more probably the latter.

Joel (Jehovah is God). A prophet whose time has to be determined solely by internal evidence.

Palmerworm. Here either (1) four stages in the development of the locust are spoken of; or (2), more probably, four terms descriptive of this insect's destructive powers are used. Thus it may be called Gnawer, or Swarmer, or Licker, or Consumer.

Destroyer (Heb., Shaddai, Almighty). This word originally may have expressed some physical-causing quality, as Jahweh has been supposed to mean the rain-pouring one, or he who makes the lightning fall on the earth. (See Robertson Smith, O.T. in Jewish Church, 423.) Spiritual significations were added to these words later, as revelation advanced. The root idea of holiness is material separation: later it meant spiritual or moral separation.

Northern: a standing difficulty, as locusts did not come from the north, but from the south. One word, however, cannot determine the reference of a prophecy. Perhaps it may mean something hostile or terrible, and have no geographical meaning or reference.

Jehoshaphat, name of a famous king of Judah (2 Chron. xx.), who won a great victory over a combined host of enemies: also of a valley east of Jerusalem, between the city and the Mount of Olives, through which the Kidron flowed: perhaps called after this king. The word means "Jehovah judges." As the Valley of Megiddo had been connected with the judgment of punishment on Judah: this valley would see the vindication of Jehovah in judgment on the heathen.

Javan, see above, p. 241.

Sabæans, a South Arabian people—those of Sheba, near the Persian Gulf. A trading people (Job i. 15; Isa. xlv. 14).

Shittim, see above, p. 243. May here mean a valley near Jerusalem. Probably the unproductive valley of the Jordan (Ezek. xlvii. 1-12). It can be translated "Ravine of Acacias."

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